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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

AS TO HER EXCELLENCIES AND DEFECTS;

WITH

A PLAN OF ECCLESIASTICAL REFORM

IN HER SPIRITUALITIES AND TEMPORALITIES;

TO ADAPT HER MORE PERFECTLY TO THE WANTS AND EXIGENCIES OF THE TIMES.

WITH AN ADDRESS TO HER MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY, THE QUEEN;

THE NOBILITY AND GENTRY OF ENGLAND.

AN ADDRESS TO THE UNIVERSITIES OF OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE

ON THE DEFECTIVE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION WHICH PREVAILS IN THEM.

AN IMPROVED PLAN OF ACADEMICAL INSTRUCTION RECOMMENDED.

A DISSERTATION ON THE OXFORD TRACTS,

TO SHEW THEIR ANTI-SCRIPTURAL NATURE, AND IRRELIGIOUS AND IMMORAL TENDENCY.

AN ADDRESS TO ALL CLASSES OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

ON THE EXISTING RELIGIOUS CRISIS, AND THEIR DUTY WITH REGARD TO IT,

AN ADDRESS TO INFIDELS, SCEPTICS, AND DEISTS,

ON THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE, AND THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

BY THE REV. J. PRIDHAM, M.A.

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, AND AUTHOR OF 'FAMILY LECTURES ON THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.' 4TH EDITION.

'Nam et monendi amici sæpe sunt, et objurgandi, et hæc accipienda amicè cum, benevole fiunt.'—*Mar. Tul. Cicero, de Amicitia.*

"Therefore to him who knoweth how to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."—*St. James* iv. 17.

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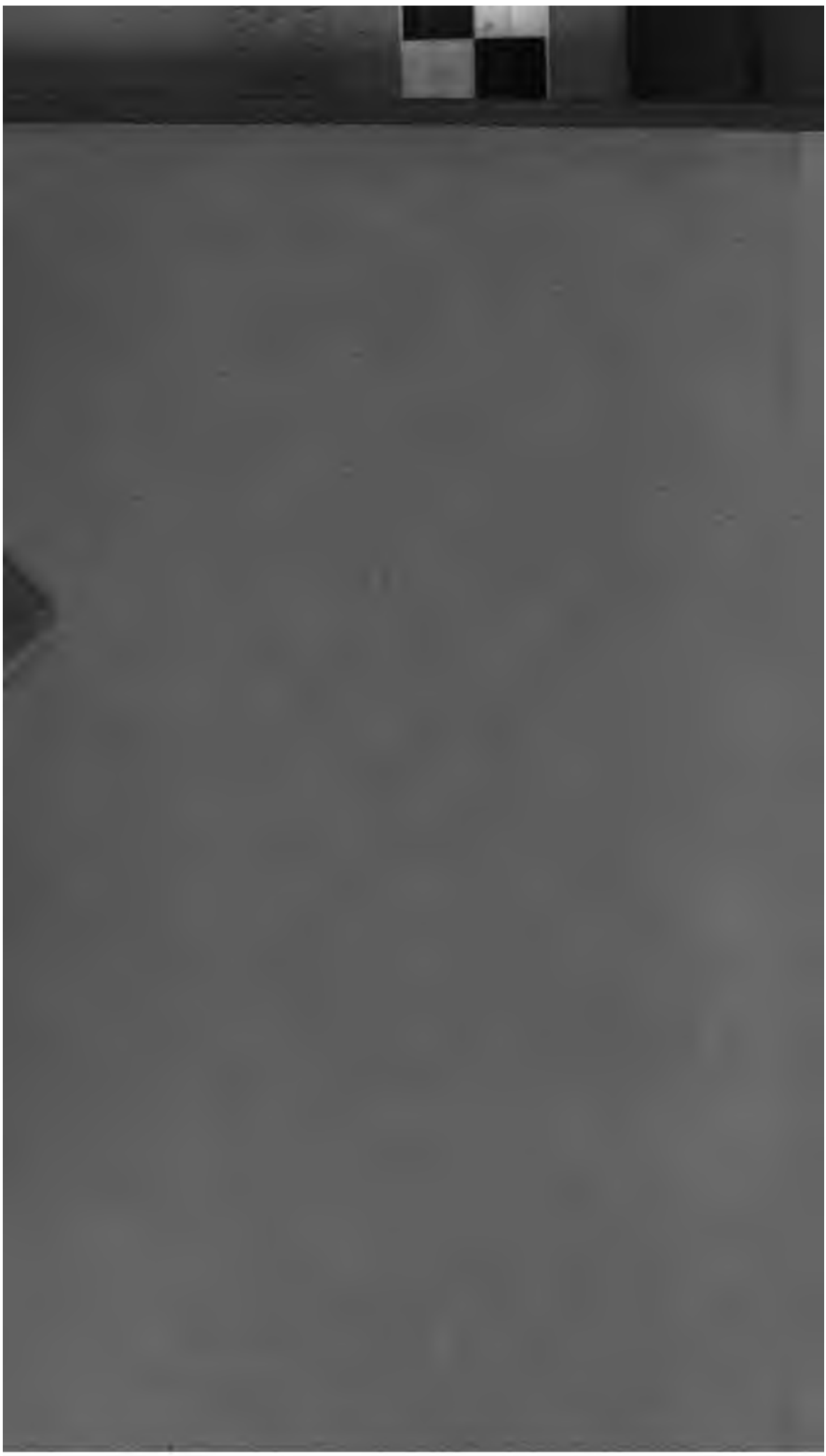

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PREFACE.

It is generally admitted, that we live in an ominous and eventful age—an age pregnant with no common results to ourselves and our posterity. For Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts, is about "to shake the heavens, and all nations, the earth, and the sea, and the dry land,* and to establish his everlasting kingdom: and "all dominions shall serve and obey him."† "Many shall be purified and made white and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."‡ It is no marvel, then, if a restless and inquisitive spirit should have been excited in reflective minds, leading them to investigate, not only the cause and effect of things—not only the arts and sciences generally, but all civil and ecclesiastical institutions particularly. We are under no serious

* Haggai ii. 6, 7. † Dan. vii. 27. ‡ Ibid. xii. 10.

apprehensions about the ultimate consequences of such an inquiry, as it respects the interests of vital religion; for he has promised, who is able to accomplish the prediction, that "wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of the times of his Church; and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure."* Error will vanish away like a dream, before the refulgency of divine truth. Mistakes, however specious, whether in religion or politics, although they may claim for themselves the sanction of antiquity and learning, stand little or no chance in the present day of escaping detection and merited exposure. Every thing will now be brought to the test of experience and utility, in order to "separate the precious from the vile," and to make what is truly estimable productive of the largest amount of good to the whole family of man.

Hence, within the last twelve years, several treatises have been put forth to public notice on the gravest of all subjects—Church Reform. Had any of those productions fully embraced the author's views, or been adequate to the removal of the faults and abuses so much complained of, his pen would certainly have been silent on the occasion. But the fact avowedly is, that those works, with all their excellencies, confine themselves too much to the temporalities, whilst they advert but slightly to the spiritualities of the Church. The avowed object of this book is to

* Isa. xxxiii. 5, 6.

examine unsparingly the whole platform, constitution, and operations of the Church, with a view to a candid exhibition of her intrinsical value as a national establishment, that she may be duly appreciated by all classes of the community; and, at the same time, to specify her defects with a design to their speedy correction.

The writer is well aware of his incompetency to do ample justice to a subject of such vast magnitude. Some, therefore, will be ready to exclaim on the occasion, 'non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis, tempus eget.' Others perhaps will feel indignant at the attempt, and represent it as impertinent, if not absolutely presumptuous. He must, however, amidst discordant opinions, be indulged in believing, that such is the clearness and pressure of the case to the extent, to which it is here carried, that the meanest advocate can scarcely fail to advance it. He makes no pretension to extensive erudition, or novelty of argument, or profundity of thought; but it by no means follows that it is useless or inexpedient to offer anything more on a subject that has not been quite exhausted. There is some truth in the observation of the late eminent Mr. Burke:—'Let us only suffer any person to tell us his story morning and evening, but for one twelve months, and he will become our master.'

The clamour which is universally raised from without against the Church of England by her enemies, will justify the repetition of arguments by her friends, who wish her prosperity and per-

manence. The author can justly assert his cordial attachment to the doctrines of the Church, and his honest conviction of her excellence and usefulness, notwithstanding her defects; and therefore he is anxious to see her put in a position that will enable her at once to glorify God still more extensively, to call forth the love and admiration of her friends, and challenge the respect even of her bitterest foes.

He sincerely believes that these desirable objects will be really secured by a timely, judicious, necessary, and salutary amelioration of her faults. Having narrowly scrutinized the motives which led him to undertake the invidious and responsible task of a Reformer, he thinks he can appeal to the searcher of all hearts in justification thereof.

Should it then, as it possibly may be asked by those who occupy the high places of authority, what could have prompted him to provoke public attention to such a subject, he would reply to the questionists in the spirited words of Terence: 'Homo sum, et nihil humani, a me alienum puto.' If that apology should not be deemed sufficient, he would modestly claim indulgence for participating in the devout and benevolent feelings of the angelic host, when they came purposely from heaven to announce the incarnation of Christ, "saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men."

The writer has also a short account to settle with the critically wise men of this world. With reference to good and candid critics who are the

real conservators of the press, he is willing to come to an easy adjustment of differences with them: "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil; which shall not break my head." *

But with regard to fastidious critics, and reviewers, and captious objectors, who may choose to exercise a morbid ingenuity on his performance, as the author lays no claim to the attribute of perfection in the art of writing, he will freely present them with as much chaff as they can find in it, to dispose of ad libitum; provided they will do him the justice to preserve the wheat and use it discreetly. This is a fair proposal, and ought to be accepted. The author once for all gratefully acknowledges his obligations to those writers from whose works he has frequently made quotations, to illustrate and strengthen his own remarks, and enrich the production.

He finally proceeds, in dependence on the assistance and blessing of the Head of the Church, to the conscientious execution of the duty which he has entirely imposed on himself. Regardless of the censures or contempt of men for well doing, he is mainly solicitous to obtain the approbation of his omniscient judge; who will soon appear to sweep away the applause and frown of the world, and "reward every man according to his works."

* Psalm cxli. 5.

AN ADDRESS

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

MOST ILLUSTRIOUS MADAM,

Your Majesty has been privileged by Him "who maketh high and low, rich and poor," with immediate descent from royal and pious ancestors, whose valour and exertions materially contributed to usher in and support that glorious reformation from papal ignorance and tyranny, which is the just boast and glory of all true Protestants. This is an auspicious event for the nation, over which you legitimately preside by affording it a solid guarantee for your Majesty's maternal care for the continuance of the Christian religion in your dominions in all its purity and integrity. And this security is greatly increased by the circumstance of your Majesty's alliance with a prince of the royal house of Saxe Coburg, your illustrious consort, imbued with the same principles, and ready at all times in conjunction with yourself, to defend

them whilst you live, and when you descend into the grave, to transmit them with undiminished lustre to your posterity. Add to this; the happiness of your devoted subjects is vastly augmented by the recent birth of a Prince of Wales, the lawful and undisputed heir apparent to the throne; holding out to them a fair prospect of a long line of descendants, whose honour it will be to emulate your bright example. May Almighty God, "in whom we live, move, and have our being," exercise continually a more than parental care over the health of our future king, that when the period of infancy and childhood has passed away, he may, like His own beloved Son, "increase daily in wisdom and stature, and be in favour both with God and man." *

Your Majesty, by His divine pleasure "by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice," was called at an early age, and a most critical juncture, to ascend the throne of these realms. Let not the difficulties which surround your earthly course dismay and discourage you, for by treading with a firm step and undaunted mind in the path of your renowned predecessor, you may calculate, with moral certainty, on that guidance and protection from on high, which is always vouchsafed to pious princes ruling in the fear of God, to enable them to surmount every difficulty, and accomplish every lawful project for the furtherance of his honour and the good of the people over whom

* Luke ii. 45—52.

they are destined to reign. Acting in such a spirit, your Majesty may, without presumption, vindicate your claim to a proportionate share of Israel's blessing in covenant with the King of heaven: "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, destroy them." *

There is one circumstance however peculiarly flattering in the commencement of your reign. Your Majesty is appointed to govern an empire so wide in its dimensions, that its limits stretch to the whole terrestial globe, and embrace considerably more than one-fifth of its immense population. Your royal sceptre extends its influential sway over large portions of the four grand divisions of the world; so that the sun in all his resplendent glory, never goes down upon certain parts of your native and colonial possessions, but always shines to illuminate some one or other of them. I need not remind your Majesty, as the temporal head of the Church and the State, that that very circumstance greatly increases your responsibility to God, who has placed you in so exalted a position. That power was not given you to gratify a vain ambition, nor merely for secular aggrandizement, nor solely for commercial purposes to enrich the

* Deut. xxxiii. 26—29.

State by the productions and wealth of the foreign kingdoms subject to your authority, but for far nobler and more important ends,—namely, that you might be the medium of communicating to them "the light of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, the unsearchable and imperishable riches of Christ." * Freely you have received heaven's best boon to fallen man; "freely," is the command of your Saviour, "give to all the nations of the earth, that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide their feet into the way of peace." † The impartation of this inestimable gift to them "who are perishing for lack of knowledge," will render them unspeakably happy, and shed the brightest lustre on your Majesty's temporal crown, but what will be of much more consequence at the consummation of all things, it will procure for you in the eternal world "that glory, and honour, and immortality, and eternal life" which Christ will graciously accord to all his faithful servants. ‡ For if, as Solomon affirms, "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people," it follows as a legitimate inference, that whatever has a direct tendency to improve the moral and religious condition of a people, and to fit them for future bliss, is of all things the most necessary to be attended to. Your Majesty's primary care then is to consult the spiritual welfare not only of your home, but also of your foreign dominions, "that where your power is known, your mercy

* Ephes. iii. 8. † Luke i. 77—79. ‡ Rom. ii. 7.

may be felt." And I am sure from the solicitude which both you and your royal consort have evinced upon all occasions to advance the happiness of your subjects, that you will ever be ready fervently to implore his direction and assistance who alone can enable you most punctually and faithfully, to discharge the high obligations imposed upon you.

I have been impelled to the consideration of this great and interesting subject, by no motive that I am aware of, except a sincere and affectionate attachment to our national Church. I must therefore be allowed to declare that in the execution of the solemn and responsible task which I have undertaken, I neither deprecate the displeasure nor court the applause and smile of any of my fellow-creatures; except as the latter can be obtained in the honest discharge of my duty: "for if I yet pleased men," by concealing or surrendering the truth, I should not be the "servant of Jesus Christ," * which I ardently desire to be. Such however is the strength of my conviction of the paramount excellence of the doctrines and ordinances of the Church of England, and such my confidence in their sufficiency, "as a means of grace and hope of glory," when faithfully propounded and rightly administered, that every effort however feebly made either to purify or strengthen her, appears to me to be doing a laudable and acceptable service. And the perfor-

* Gal. i. 10.

mance of this onerous duty, if it be done in humility and faithfulness, though it will provoke the scorn of some who are identified with the abuses, which it exposes, will assuredly be accepted by him who judgeth the secrets of all hearts.

A great number of the most cordial admirers of the Church are grieved at the existence of evils and corruptions which impair her beauty and diminish her native strength, and are terrified at the approach of dangers, which they fear will overwhelm her. And yet when we look stedfastly at her intrinsic excellence, and call to recollection all God's gracious interpositions in her behalf, when we take into consideration the prayers which her devoutest children are daily offering for her, is it unreasonable to believe that "the gates of hell shall never be suffered to prevail against her?" That she may be melted down in the assaying crucible of affliction is not improbable; for God assures us that he sits as the refiner and purifier of the sons of Levi, but she will lose nothing by the fiery process, except the scum and dross of her imperfections. She "will come forth ultimately as gold purified seven times in the fire."

But still we must not be insensible either to the evils or to the duties which the existence of them calls forth; and therefore I have been desirous to form and lead others to do the same, a just and scriptural estimate of their nature and extent; humbly hoping that if I could not myself suggest an adequate remedy, I might be the means of inducing wiser

and better men to turn their attention to this important work.

I deeply feel both the greatness and the difficulty of the task, but I have not approached it in my own strength or wisdom. And he who is enabled to go forth in this spirit should not be dismayed by a sense of his own weakness and insufficiency; knowing that God often places the treasures of heavenly wisdom in earthen vessels in order to show that the excellency of the power to effect a great object is not in the instrument, but in himself.* And as if he purposely designed to humble "the wise and the scribe and the disputer of this world," and to moderate the confidence of intellectual pride he frequently employs the most inconsiderable agents to accomplish the great dispensations of his unerring Providence.

The most afflictive and debasing evils of our establishment, madam, are the sin of Pluralism, and the consequent non-residence of the beneficed clergy. The dignitaries of the Church, and those who are less favoured occupy, as pluralists, (amounting to the number of 3,320.)—8,160 benefices out of the 12,600, which there are in England and Wales. A revenue estimated at nearly £450,000 per annum, is devoted in a great measure to sinecures: the ostensible purpose for which it is paid, being that of providing divine service, in about thirty cathedral and collegiate Churches, which is of comparatively little benefit to the nation.

* 2 Cor. iv. 7.

And what is the obvious result of the system? It appears from the last Parliamentary returns, that out of 10,533 livings in England and Wales, there are only about 4000 residents; more than 4000 benefices are insufficient to support a minister:—and more than 4000 have no suitable parsonage residence upon them. These two statements placed in juxta-position sufficiently show the gross misapplication of the Church funds which are fully adequate to make the 12,600 livings, when separated into distinct benefices, by the abrogation of the consolidated act to an annual income in villages of from 3 to £400. per annum, and in cities and populous towns to 450 or £500. per annum. When these funds were first created, each living was a distinct rectory; the emoluments of which were entirely assigned to the maintenance of the parochial minister. To render the Church of England more efficient, to adapt her more perfectly to the wants and exigencies of the times, to infuse vitality into her ministrations, and to prevent the commonalty from seeking proper instruction out of their own parishes, we must revert to the original system of our wise and pious ancestors; by abolishing pluralism, the bane of the Church, locating a faithful shepherd in every village, and, after the decease of existing incumbents, not permitting any minister, whatever may be his rank or talents, to possess more than one benefice, with cure of souls. This is the only effectual remedy for the corruptions against which the public are constantly protesting, and the con-

tinuance of which threaten to subvert the very foundation on which the establishment is built:— an event, even the contemplation of which is calculated to fill its friends with inconceivable dismay. It is moreover proposed to enforce the residence of our venerable prelates, and to assign to them the superintendence of divine worship in our magnificent cathedrals (some of which are not unworthy imitations of the temple of Solomon) assisted by their respective archdeacons and vicars. And as deans and sub-deans, and precentors, and prebends, are a class of clergymen, not of divine appointment, and not recognized in the New Testament, but an institution of the dark and monastical ages of the Church, the immense revenues which they enjoy for inadequate services not essential to its welfare, together with their offices should be abolished at the expiration of their lives, and the proceeds thereof vested in the hands of an ecclesiastical commission to be applied for the augmentation of poor livings, whereby they might be raised to such an amount as to increase the comfort, respectability, and usefulness of the parochial clergy. By the adoption of this extensive amelioration, your majesty and the legislature will elevate the Church to the position which she was designed to maintain by her founders and benefactors, increase the efficiency of her ministrations, and confer the most substantial benefit which can be imparted to the nation, and its foreign dependencies.

Another circumstance that calls for the atten-

tion of your Majesty's Legislature is the rapid growth of the population within the last forty years, which requires increased means of instruction. In our large cities and towns, millions are growing up from infancy to manhood who never hear the word of God. Upon an average not perhaps more than one in eight or ten attend worship in the Establishment. And though Churches are fast multiplying around us, yet the population is proportionably increasing. Thus are we still, to a great extent, an unchristianized land:—the deepest ignorance and irreligion still prevail as is manifest from the crowded state of our municipal goals; and your Majesty's judges are continually deploring the alarming increase of depravity and crime. The wider diffusion of genuine Christian knowledge, through the medium of an efficient gospel ministry, as recommended in this work, is the only practicable corrective of such glaring moral evils.

Another point, to which I beg leave to call the attention of your Majesty, as the constitutional Head of the Church, and as having the means of calling forth the energies of the clergy into operation, is contained in the following statement. It is estimated that in England and Wales there are upwards of three millions of Protestant Dissenters. In the Principality of Wales, Dissent has grown to such a prodigious extent that its ranks considerably outnumber the members of the Establishment. It should seem from a return recently published by J. A. Johnnes, Esq. 'that the Dissenting places of worship in Wales amounted in 1833, to 1428,

while those of the national Church were only 829 The number of the former has most probably increased since that period. The causes of this growing defection may in great measure be owing to a want of more popular instruction conveyed in the native dialect of the Principality. The further progress of this serious evil may be checked by the appointment of such clergymen only to vacant benefices, as are sufficiently conversant with the vernacular language of the people to be able to " speak to them in their own tongue, the wonderful works of God."'

But my present observations with regard to dissidents will be directed exclusively to the relation which they bear to the Anglican Church. These almost strangers to the national communion are at best indifferent to the welfare of the establishment: many of them decidedly, and upon educational principles, hostile to its very existence. As an aggregate they are daily increasing in numbers, wealth, talent, intelligence, and in power. This is not a satisfactory prospect to the friends of the Established Church. And if it be not an evidence of some grievous error, which should be remedied, it at least portends a wide-spreading calamity which should by all prudent means be averted. The national standard of faith is so adjusted, and the national ritual is so worded in some particulars, that a large, and influential, and excellent portion of the community, is unable to reconcile itself to the adoption of them. It would perhaps be in vain to hope that under existing

circumstances, the dissent of many pious and excellent men can be entirely eradicated. The evils of discord and schism will therefore continue in some degree to afflict the Church of Christ until the establishment of his millennial kingdom: then "all shall see eye to eye," that is, distinctly through the glass of faith; then "the envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim."* "And the Lord Jesus Christ shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one."† Then real Christians, seeing that they differ only in unimportant points, and are agreed in all the cardinal doctrines of the Gospel, will be ashamed of their uncharitable dissensions, and live in harmony, peace, and love, co-operating most cordially in promoting the Redeemer's glory.

But the causes of Dissent may surely be confined within narrower limits. It is not on points of doctrine which are essential to salvation, that orthodox Dissenters keep aloof from our communion. It is principally in matters of Church government, discipline, and rituals, that they justify their separation from us. All practical believers in Jesus Christ—all real, vital, experimental Christians are united in the fundamental verities of their common faith. I have attempted, therefore, to recommend some healing and charitable

* Isa. xi. 12, 13. † Zech. xiv. 9.

measures of peace and comprehension in Chapter XXII. Without compromising the majesty of truth, and by making slight concessions in things absolutely non-essential, I have proposed a plan to conciliate all reasonable dissidents, and to facilitate their entrance into the Church—such a plan also as will leave those that are prejudiced without any valid excuse for their non-communion with us.

My heart's desire, therefore, and prayer to God is, "that those obstacles which now exclude so large a body of our countrymen from the pale of the Church, should be impartially considered by the proper authorities, in the spirit of prayer and charity and that, after a careful revision of our rituals and services, such reasonable alterations, as have been suggested in this publication, may be made, without one unscriptural concession, to obviate every objection, and lay the foundation on the broad platform of evangelical faith, of unity, and concord, and perpetual peace: then the grounds of our differences being removed, we shall no longer regard as opponents or strangers, men imbued with the spirit of Owen, Baxter, Calamy, Howe, Doddridge, Watts, Henry, and Hall; but embrace them as brethren; addressing them in the courteous language of Moses to Hobab, his father-in-law, we are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel. And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what

goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee."*

The means which are requisite for the accomplishment of this great work, are ready to your Majesty's hand. It is exclusively a theological duty, and none but ecclesiastical persons can take any part in the execution of it. You have a priesthood at command, which no nation can equal in piety, talent, and erudition.

The alterations which I have judged it expedient to make in our liturgical services, may easily be carried into effect by a commission similar to that appointed in 1689, consisting of some of our most pious bishops and divines, empowered by your Majesty and Parliament to meet and confer together on the subject. And I hope that the commendation passed upon the labours of that commission by Bishop Burnet, who assisted in it, may, without breach of modesty, be applied in some degree, to the emendations I have proposed: "The corrections which had been agreed to in it would make the whole frame of our Liturgy still more perfect, as well as more unexceptionable, and will, I trust, at some time or other, be better entertained than they were then. I am persuaded that they are such as would bring in much the greater part of the Dissenters to the communion of the Church, and are in themselves desirable, though there were not a Dissenter in the nation."

The present time appears to be peculiarly fitted for a calm consideration of this momentous sub-

* Numb. x. 29—33.

secure "the blessing of the Lord and righteousness from the God of our salvation;" but the neglect of his high command, will make us obnoxious to his wrath for ever and ever.

Your Majesty has greatly endeared yourself to all classes of your subjects by your courteous and constitutional bearing; and the nation is justly grateful for the happy consummation of its hopes. In temporal concerns you have shown great anxiety conscientiously to fulfil your duty: deign now, I humbly intreat you, to consider our wants in things spiritual and eternal.

Your Majesty is vested with power to remedy great evils, and to promote extensive good—evils which seriously impede the progress of the Christian religion—good to millions of perishing and immortal souls. All admit that the work of religious reformation was never completed in this country; and events, familiar to every reader of English history, have, in various ways, retarded its accomplishment. It would be the most brilliant act of your Majsty's reign, to put the finishing hand to this glorious edifice, which is destined to survive "the wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds." Thus would you emulate the example of Josiah, David, and Hezekiah; yea, of your Saviour hinself, who purified the temple from the profanations of secularity and avarice.* The personal influence possessed by your Majesty, independent of your defined and constitutional powers,

* Matt. xxi. 12, 13. John ii. 12—17.

AN ADDRESS

TO THE NOBILITY AND GENTRY OF ENGLAND.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

You will not, I trust, consider it impertinent or assuming in me to give you "a word in season," on a topic of vital importance, not only to your Lordships, but to the community at large, at the head of which Divine Providence has placed you, for its immediate benefit. None can sufficiently estimate the immense advantage of sound legislation, and good government, but those who have been eye-witnesses of the incredible mischief and disorder, which almost necessarily accrue from lawless despotism, from licentious anarchy, and from agrarian spoliation. "Where passion runs riot," and every man doeth that which is right in his own eyes," there none of the rights of God or men are free from its capricious insolence. "Then judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for when truth is fallen in the street,

The conscientious discharge of your office may confer lasting benefits upon the nation, but the abuse of it to any secular or wrong purpose, must be productive of great evils to multitudes of the human species.

The knowledge of true religion is essential not only to the due performance of ecclesiastical, but also of civil duties. He therefore will make the best legislator, and the most enlightened judge, who regulates his spirit and deportment by the holy maxims of Scripture. Indeed, all sound legislation must be based upon the principles of God's holy word, and especially upon the golden rule prescribed by our Saviour; "whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye unto them; for this is the law and the prophets."* What motives can be so forcible to excite us to good, and deter us from evil, as the all-constraining thought, that the smile or frown of God must inevitably follow the manner in which we discharge our duties, whether social or civil, whether religious or domestic! The noble peer in parliament, the judge seated on his tribunal, or any other public functionary, must legislate and administer justice "in the fear of God," employing "the sword for the protection of them that do well, and for a terror to evil doers; for he is the minister of God for good, and also a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."† When we look at the temper, and discretion, and wis-

* Matt. vii. 12. † Rom. xiii. 4.

only inferior to that which is exhibited in Paradise, where "angels cast their given crowns at his feet, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." * Not only will you repair to the sanctuary as often as its doors are thrown open for your reception, but you will enforce the attendance of your noble sons and daughters, your servants, and dependants, that they may unite with yourselves in worshipping God in spirit and in truth: for the great Father of all seeketh such to worship him." † Abraham adopted this method of honouring the Lord,‡ and he graciously accepted his services, saying, "I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing." § Who is more renowned for piety and fidelity, and true wisdom than he is, even at this day, throughout the east and the west, from the northern to the southern hemispheres of our terrestrial globe? Be emulous, my Lords and Gentlemen, of his devotional example; and then you will not only be the lights and ornaments of society, but what is more, you will honour God, and draw down a measure of that holy patriarch's blessing upon your heads; yea, receive the same eulogium which was pronounced on him; "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to

* Rev. iv. 9—11. † John iv. 23, 24. ‡ Gen. xii. 7, 8.
§ Ibid. xii. 1—3.

and perpetuate the work which he begun; and multitudes following in the same religious course from age to age, may be the favoured instruments of swelling the population of heaven. Every grade and rank of society below you, look up to you, my Lords and Gentlemen, with an anxious eye, as the formers of their manners, and as models for their imitation. If they discover anything laudable in your deportment, some portion of the excellency of the original will be transfused into the copies of which they are faint resemblances, and these may be multiplied almost indefinitely.

There is another point of unspeakable importance, to which I must beg leave to call your attention, a point in which the Church and the country is deeply concerned; I allude to the extensive patronage which you possess in ecclesiastical property. You have an indisputable right to present to no less than five thousand benefices. By the proper exercise of your power in preferring suitable persons to the occupation of these livings, you can materially contribute to the advancement of "true and undefiled religion," and thus bless the church and the nation; but by making an indiscreet choice of persons unfit by viciousness of life, and lack of Christian knowledge, to sustain the pastoral office, the responsibility of which made the apostle tremble,* you may inflict an injury on the Church of Christ, and on multitudes of immortal spirits, for which you can make no

* 1 Cor. ii. 3. 2 Cor. ii. 16.

likewise: " for until the example is generally imitated in the bestowment of patronage upon the most meritorious, without reference to rank or connexions, the stability of the church will be endangered, not so much by the avowed hostility of its enemies, as by the unfaithfulness of its pretended though insidious friends.

Should any of our dignified Peers or country gentlemen who have patronage to bestow, think themselves not fully competent to discharge the solemn trust which it imposes, let them follow the example of King William the Third, by transfering the disposal of it to an ecclesiastical commission, by whom their pious intentions will be strictly fulfilled. This is a sacrifice with which God will be well pleased; for whilst it will evince that his glory is the paramount object which is sought, it will demonstrate an attachment to the interests of the Church, which will shed a lustre on their coronets, and procure for them " a name, an everlasting name that shall not be cut off." *

I am,
My Lords and Gentlemen,
Your obedient and humble Servant,
THE AUTHOR.

* Isa. lvi. 5.

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to aspire at, 'possessed of a sound and upright and intelligent mind, united to a healthy and vigorous body.'* When God, by his sovereign fiat, had spoken the other parts of creation into existence, he held a consultation with the other two sacred persons composing the blessed Trinity, respecting the formation of the human species; whom he designed to constitute the delegated lords of the universe. "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them. And God blessed them and said unto them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it."†

This image, or resemblance to the Majesty of heaven, must be sought for in the constitution of the mind; for as God is a pure, immaterial, and intellectual spirit,‡ 'without body, parts or passions,'§ all the similitude which intelligent, finite beings bear to Him, can be found no where but in the properties and operations of their immortal souls. And in this respect, we can discover man to be a real, though feeble, emanation and reflection of the omniscient God. He is gifted with the

* Horace, Ode 31, Book I. † Gen. i. 26—28.

‡ John iv. 24.

§ See the First Article of the Church of England.

dition, by sending Jesus his beloved Son to bless and save him, in order that he might recover his lost possession and regain all the felicity of heaven.*

> 'Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
> With loss of Eden, till one Greater Man
> Restore us, and regain the blissful seat.'
>
> *Paradise Lost, Book I.*

The fall and defection of our first parents paved the way for the foundation and erection of Christ's visible church on earth, to be consummated in heaven. To accomplish this momentous object was the express design of our Saviour's mission to this lower world, as he himself acquaints us. "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth in me, (and followeth my bright example) should not walk in darkness, but have the light of everlasting life."†

Accordingly our blessed Lord laid the foundation of his spiritual Church in his own person, doctrine, precepts, and sacraments, crucifixion, and mediation, when "he came into Galilee, preaching, and saying, the time (mentioned in the predictions of the prophets) is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe the gospel."‡

In confirmation of his purpose to establish and perpetuate his Church, to the latest generations

* Gen. iii. 15. † John viii. 12; xii. 46. ‡ Mark i. 14, 15.

whose vast affairs he now conducts by the agency of his Spirit, and the ministrations of his faithful servants. Accordingly he was raised from the dead by the working of God's mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, who hath set Him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and given Him to be the head over all things, to the Church, which is his (mystical) body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

To maintain his regal authority as King of Zion, to comfort his saints, and to extend the empire of his Church, he has given her "some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors, and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till all his true members come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."† In pursuance of these objects, he "feeds the Church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood." As its divine shepherd, he daily administers aliment to his flock, brings them into the verdant pastures of his word, leads them forth beside the waters of comfort, converting their souls, and guiding them into the paths of righteousness for

* Eph. i. 19—23. † Ibid. iv. 10, 14.

such, we must, through grace, unfeignedly repent of our sins, have a lively faith in his merits, and feel the need of his Spirit to regenerate and sanctify our souls, in order that we may be qualified to serve him acceptably here, and enjoy the beatitude of his kingdom hereafter; for he himself, who best knows the spiritual nature of his kingdom, and the only terms of admission to it, has solemnly asseverated, "except a man," any man, every man, "be born again (by his Spirit) he cannot see the kingdom of God."* All his people are united to him by a genuine and operative faith, whereby they bring forth abundantly "the fruits of righteousness to the praise of his holy name." Seek, then, to be inserted into him, by the same process, as living branches of the true vine;† that possessing "the healthful Spirit of his grace," and being watered by the continual dew of his blessing, "you may go on to christian perfection," and finally, with all his ransomed people, attain to everlasting life.

Now the Church of England is an integral part of Christ's universal church, as is clearly proveable from her doctrines, and the spirit which pervades and animates her liturgical services. But what constitutes a true evangelical Church is the question? I answer, that is a true Church of Christ which embraces and preserves all the essentials and fundamentals of Christianity, whose doctrines are scriptural, and by whom the two sacraments insti-

* John iii. 3.

† Ibid xv. 1—8.

tuted by Christ are administered according to his ordinance; consequently that society are members of Christ's Church, who sincerely believe the truths of his Gospel, conform to his worship, and honour him by an unreserved compliance with the whole of his revealed will. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him." *

The Church of England bears all the discriminating marks of a true church, by embodying all the essential doctrines of Christ in her Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy.† To substantiate this important truth, we need only to refer to her recognized standards of faith.

1. Let us glance at her fundamental Articles which are derived from, and are in perfect accordance with, the letter and spirit of God's infallible word. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." ‡ Every true son of Christ's visible Church believes in the plenary inspiration of sacred writ. Our venerable Reformers Cranmer and Ridley compiled the Articles and Homilies, from the sacred volume. And they were fully competent to perform the arduous undertak-

* John xiv. 21.

† See Bishop Burnet on the Nineteenth Article, 252—258.

‡ 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

ing with fidelity to God and man; as is evident from their deep piety and integrity,—from their accurate knowledge of Scripture,—and their profound learning both sacred and profane. Add to this, the fact, that so strong was their conviction of the importance and truth of the doctrines which they contain, that they went joyfully to the stake, to pour out their blood as a libation on the altar of God, in confirmation of their faith,—rather than deny the truth which they so firmly believed.

The first Article requires our faith in the unity and trinity of the Deity; and although as it regards the former, 'there is but one God,' the maker and preserver of all things; yet with respect to the latter proposition, we must believe that in the unity of this Godhead there be three persons of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. 'The true faith is this; that we worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity: neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance. For the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.'* This doctrine so essential to salvation, is confessedly above the loftiest exercise of unassisted reason; but is in no respect contrary and repugnant to it. God who is perfectly wise and good, and fully comprehends the mode of his own spiritual existence, would not have revealed this truth had it been false on the one hand, or

* Athanasian Creed.

unnecessary on the other. He requires us therefore to receive it as an article of faith on his own proper authority: for he has not published it to gratify a morbid curiosity, nor as a matter of cold speculation, but as a solemn truth, in which our happiness is deeply involved. The rejection of the doctrine will assuredly cause us to lose the heavenly blessings of which the three divine persons of the Trinity are respectively the authors; benefits which we should ardently desire, namely, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost." * It is wiser, in my judgment, to believe, even mysteries, when taught by the all-wise God, than proudly to disdain them with sceptics, who exalt their own fallible reason, above the wisdom of the majesty of heaven.

The second Article treats of the humanity, divinity, and immaculate conception of the Son of God. The fourth asserts the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ to the right hand of God. The fifth insists on the personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit. The sixth affirms the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures "to make us wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus." The seventh teaches us that 'the Old Testament is not contrary to the New,' but that both harmonize in their doctrines and moral tendency. The ninth avows the Church's belief in original sin, and the consequent depravity of all mankind from

* 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

their birth. The tenth shows the enslaved state of man's will, his disinclination and inability to good, without the assistance of divine grace. The eleventh inculcates justification by faith only in the merits and righteousness of Christ. The twelfth and thirteenth demonstrate that such good works as are acceptable to God, are the necessary effect and produce of a justifying faith. The fifteenth exhibits the unsullied righteousness and impeccability of Christ, and the all-sufficiency of his sacrifice to procure our reconciliation with God. The seventeenth maintains 'the everlasting purpose of God in the election, effectual vocation, sanctification, and exaltation of his people, to everlasting life and felicity.' The eighteenth sets forth eternal salvation as attainable only by the name of Christ, and pronounces the perdition of those who seek it in any other way. The nineteenth describes the nature and constitution of a scriptural church. The twenty-fifth illustrates the nature, properties, and benefits which the two sacraments confer on those, who 'duly use and worthily receive the same;' and the condemnation which attends the improper reception thereof. The twenty-seventh explains the nature of baptism and the advantages which result therefrom, to those who rightly observe that holy sacrament. The twenty-eighth speaks of 'the Lord's Supper not only as a sign of the love which Christians ought to have towards one another, but as a sacrament significative of our redemption by Christ's death, and the spiritual nourishment afforded to

our souls, 'when we rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same.' The thirty-first declares the crucifixion of Christ to be the only effectual atonement and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, both actual and original.' *

2. The Homilies set forth in the time of Queen Elizabeth enforce, in the main, the same cardinal truths as the above cited Articles, in explicit language, supported by Scripture, and the testimony of the earliest Fathers.

3. The Liturgy embodies all the leading doctrines of the Gospel, in the prayers, collects, epistles, gospels, and psalms, read in the weekly services of the Church. It breathes throughout the most fervent aspirations to God for the bestowment of temporal and spiritual mercies, not only on ourselves, but on 'all sorts and conditions of men; that he would be pleased to make his way known unto them, his saving health to all nations.'

The language in which these devout compositions are couched, is so perspicuous and chaste, as to make them intelligible to every age, and adapt them to the edification of all classes of worshippers. Several ministers without the pale of the establishment have frequently borne faithful testimony to the paramount excellence of the Liturgy. Some of them, as the great Dr. Watts,† have cited portions of the church prayers in their writings, and have spoken of them as important

* See the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England.

† Watts on the Gift and Spirit of Prayer.

helps to devotion. And others have adopted them in their ministrations from a conviction of their tendency to promote the edification of the congregations over which they preside. And one of them not less distinguished for sound piety than for talent and superior judgment, "who being dead yet speaketh," publicly * avowed his belief that the Liturgy of the Church of England deservedly holds the very first rank among uninspired compositions.' In a church then so orthodox and scriptural in her religious creeds and formularies of faith, so well adapted to promote the temporal and spiritual interests of this great nation, I do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice, "as built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom the whole building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." † "She is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." ‡

Should the captious disputant derisively ask, 'Where was your religion before the reign of Henry the Eighth?' we can satisfy his curiosity, by replying, 'In the oracles of God.' The religion of Jesus, (of which our Protestant establishment is a part and parcel, notwithstanding its palpable defects,) can claim the highest antiquity; it is not only coeval with time, but greatly anterior to it. Prospectively, in the counsels and purposes of

* Rev. Robert Hall, in his speech at the Leicester Bible Meeting, about the year 1802.

† Eph. ii. 19—22. ‡ 1 Tim. iii. 15.

God, it existed from all eternity, Hence Christ is spoken of in the inspired volume as "the Lamb foreordained and slain before the foundation of the world," * for the redemption of his Church; but was manifested under the Gospel dispensation, for the comfort of those who seek salvation through faith in his atoning blood. God foresaw that man would fall from his integrity, and mercifully provided beforehand against that sad disaster. And consequently the Apostle Peter states that "all the saints and household of God, whose names are written in heaven," derived the benefits of this gracious system, by anticipation, before the commencement of time.† "The tree of life placed in the midst of the garden of Eden," seems to have been intended as a symbol or sacramental pledge of immortality; and by eating the fruit of it, life and felicity were sealed to Adam, as long as he continued obedient.‡

The violation of the covenant of works by our first parents led to a disclosure of "the eternal purpose of God" to defeat the malice of Satan, to redeem his church from all iniquity, and "to purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works," by the birth and crucifixion of his adorable Son. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."§ A promise substantially to the

* Rev. xiii. 8. † 1 Peter i. 19, 20. ‡ Gen. ii. 9.
§ Gen. iii. 15.

same effect was made to Abraham and all mankind. "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."* Similar assurances were given to Isaac and Jacob, who was inspired to reveal the coming and kingdom of Christ. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."†

When God saw fit to take the Jewish nation into covenant with himself, in order to propagate his knowledge throughout the world, and to prepare it for the advent of the Messiah, he gave it an initiatory system of religion, consisting of types and ceremonies, prefigurative of the blessings of the everlasting gospel.

Josiah, Hezekiah, and Asa, fostered the Old Testament church amongst their subjects, by their own piety and good example.‡ The schools of the Prophets, over which Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha presided, were nurseries for the extension of true religion, in opposition to the idolatry and polytheism of the pagan world.

The Prophets from David to Malachi "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."§ John the Baptist came, as the precursor of Jesus, to make suitable preparation for the establishment of his celestial kingdom, by "preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins," and pointing him out to his dis-

* Gen. xxii. 18. † Ibid. xlix. 10.

‡ See Books of Kings and Chronicles. § 1 Peter i. 11.

ciples as " the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."*

To accomplish the prophecy of Isaiah concerning himself, he declared, " I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." And to describe the important benefits of Christ's reign, he adds, " Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."†

" But when the fulness of the time was come, (which had been fixed on in the counsels of eternity) God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons;"‡ then the prophecies respecting Christ were fulfilled, the Levitical dispensation was abolished, and " the kingdom of heaven was opened to all believers."

The Apostles endowed with the miraculous gifts the Holy Ghost, published the glad tidings of salvation in almost all the known regions of the earth; and with such remarkable success, that, in fifty years after the death and ascension of their Lord and Master, their preaching triumphed over the prejudice of the Jew, the bigotry of the Gentile, the wisdom of the philosopher, and the ignorance and depravity of the world. Such bloodless

* John i. 29. † Luke iii. 3, 7. ‡ Gal. iv. 4, 5.

victories argued the truth of the Christian religion no less than the presence and assistance of its divine founder, to propagate and maintain it in all the world.*

It had to contend in its very infancy with the idolatry, prejudice, and cruelty of Pagan Rome, instigated by the malice of Satan during twelve successive reigns. Thousands of its first supporters cheerfully sacrificed their lives and property in its defence; and so fierce was the persecution against the Church, that its extinction would have been inevitable, had not God determined to preserve it, in spite of its adversaries, as "an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations."† But the blood of the martyrs was destined to be the prolific seed of the Church; for "so mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed"‡ that in a short time, it filled the palace, the court, the camp—yea, the whole world, with its converts.

The Emperor Constantine embraced Christianity, and afforded it the protection of law. But, as the best institutions, if not improved, have a tendency to decay; after the death of Constantine, heresies and corruptions gradually crept into the Church, till God, in just displeasure, permitted Popery, "the mystery of iniquity, to work," and overwhelm it with error and delusion.§ Wickliff and Cranmer, at different periods in England, and Luther and Melancthon in Germany, and Beza and Zuinglius in Switzerland, fired with righteous

* Matt. xxviii. 20. † Isa. lx. 15. ‡ Acts xix. 20.
§ 2 Thess. ii. 7.

indignation against its perversions of the truth, exposed them by their translations of the Holy Scriptures into the vernacular languages of their respective countries; which, together with their writings on religious subjects, opened the eyes of mankind to see the abominations of papal tyranny, and to effect a happy and blessed reformation. Emboldened by the example of the continental Reformers, King Edward (of blessed memory) began the revision of the doctrines and services of our own Church. Henry the Eighth made considerable advances in the same pious undertaking, and, finally, Queen Elizabeth brought it to perfection by settling the articles and liturgy on their present basis, and giving them the sanction and authority of law.

The Church of England is admirably qualified to instruct the ignorant, to enlighten those who are in darkness, to console the real penitent, to teach the way of salvation to the lost, to edify the believer in Christ, and to guide sincere inquirers to the attainment of everlasting life.

As a part of Christ's vineyard, which he cultivates with assiduous care, and defends by his omnipotent arm, she has nothing to fear from the hostility of her adversaries, or the formality and lukewarmness of pretended friends. Invincible in the strength of the Lord, and watered with the dew of his blessing, she will prosper and prevail. So long as she "keeps the testimony of Christ's word," and is faithful to the commission which he has intrusted to her, to evangelize the nation and the

world, she may safely defy the combined assaults of her foes, whether visible or invisible; for our glorified Lord, "who sitteth in the heavens, shall laugh the enemies of his Church to scorn, he shall have them in derision:"* yea, he hath told her in assurance of his love, "that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her." † To confound the haters of his Gospel, to purify his Church militant from the defilement she may contract, and to fit her for more extensive usefulness, he may "put her in the furnace of affliction;" but he will regulate the fire, and conduct the whole process, so that nothing shall be lost but the dross of her imperfection.‡

The Church of England, fiercely opposed by Papists; and, violently assailed by sceptics and infidels, and unreasonable dissidents, who seek her destruction, resembles the mystic bush in the land of Egypt; she constantly burns through the insatiate fury of her adversaries, and yet is not consumed; "because the Lord of Hosts is with her, the God of Jacob is her refuge." § "Though persecuted she is not forsaken" of her Lord; "though cast down, she is not destroyed." ‖

So long as she keeps inviolably the covenant of her God, though like the apocalyptic witnesses, she may be consigned to a temporary death, yet like them, she will rise again with renewed vigour, and "ascend up to heaven in a cloud," to the everlasting confusion of her enemies.¶

* Psalm ii. 14. † Matt. xvi. 18. ‡ Mal. iii. 3, 4.
§ Psalm xlvi. 7. ‖ 2 Cor. iv. 9. ¶ Rev. xi. 12.

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and all their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."* "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."†

* Isaiah liv. 17. † Ibid. xli. 10.

CHAPTER II.

RELIGION WEARS A MOST BENIGN ASPECT TOWARDS MEN BY PROVIDING A SOVEREIGN ANTIDOTE FOR ALL THE SORROWS CONSEQUENT UPON THEIR APOSTACY FROM GOD, AND BY OPENING TO THEM A SURE PROSPECT OF SUBSTANTIAL BLESSEDNESS IN A FUTURE PARADISIACAL STATE—THE GREAT UTILITY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH FOR PROMOTING THE CAUSE OF RELIGION.

"TRUE and undefiled religion" is the supreme love of God planted in the heart, by the agency of his Spirit, whereby his lost image is restored, and the soul is capacitated, not only to maintain communion with him in divine ordinances, but to bring forth copiously all those "fruits of righteousness" which redound to the glory of God, and the benefit of mankind. It is seated in the soul, and diffuses its sweet influence throughout the whole man. As the blood, the great source of vitality and health emanates from the heart, and circulates freely through the arteries and veins, to every part of the body, which is thus nourished and preserved; so the heart, whence all our thoughts and actions originate, "being renewed in knowledge," and created after God "in righteousness and true holiness;"* sends forth a stream of spiritual life,

* Col. iii. 10. Ephes. iv. 24.

new-birth unto righteousness," as it does the omnipotence of Him who accomplishes it.*

Were men generally to live under the influence of the Christian religion, what a different aspect would the world present! Instead of war and murder, and cruelty, and slavery, and oppression, and falsehood, and fraud, and injustice, and malice, and envy, and every species of iniquity, now so common; peace, and benevolence, and unfeigned kindness, and liberty, and sincerity, and truth, and integrity, with all their lovely train; would characterize the spirit and deportment of mankind towards each other.

And what sorrow is there to which fallen humanity is exposed, for which the religion of Jesus does not offer an adequate remedy?—" it binds up the broken-hearted" by assuaging their grief;—it preaches good tidings to the meek and pure in heart, by declaring that they are the children of God;—it proclaims on their repentance, liberty to the captives of sin and Satan, and the " opening of the prison to them that are bound," with the galling fetters of iniquity and unbelief; —it proclaims " the acceptable year of the Lord," by saying, " blessed are ye that mourn" for transgression, " for ye shall be comforted;"—it gives the real penitent, " the oil of joy and gladness for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that he

* See the Author's Eighty-eight Lectures on the principles and practice of the Christian Religion. Chap. XIX. and XX. Vol. I.

might be glorified:"*—in fine, guiding them safely by its divine counsels, through all the perils of this mortal life, it prepares them for celestial glory, by conducting them to the presence of God, "where is fulness of joy, and to his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore."†

Let all, then, who desire to please the Lord, to find a counterpoise against the evils attendant on this imperfect state, and to attain consummate bliss in the world of light and glory above, earnestly strive to become, by repentance and faith, real members of Christ's spiritual kingdom. Let every one, conscious of his need of divine mercy, importunately cry, "remember me, O Lord, according to the favour which thou bearest to thy people: O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the felicity of thy chosen: rejoice in the gladness of thy people, and give thanks with thine inheritance."‡

Now, a National Church, founded upon the word of God, is eminently calculated for diffusing the knowledge of true religion amongst all ranks and degrees of men. And such a Church can claim a divine original. The theocracy, with which the Jews as a people were favoured, was evidently a divine institution, intended for their spiritual and temporal benefit. It consisted of a code of laws, doctrines and precepts; it had a formulary of sacrificial rites and ceremonies; it was replete with types and symbols, "the shadows of good things

* Isa. lxi. 1—4. † Psalm xvi. 11. ‡ Psalm cvi. 4, 5.

to come," significantly referring to Christ, and the blessings of the Gospel dispensation.* So that the whole Jewish economy was the Christian religion in its infancy;—the figurative representation of Christ's spiritual Church, together with the benefits which it dispenses.†

Now, if God saw fit to adopt such an establishment, and to continue it through successive ages, until the coming of his Son, is it not an impeachment of his consummate wisdom, yea, the highest arrogance, to call it in question, or doubt its propriety?

It is not the design of this publication to discuss at great length the lawfulness or expediency of the Christian establishment, which prevails in this kingdom: nor is this requisite; since the task has been so ably performed by Bishop Hall, Reynolds, Davenant, Warburton, Hooker, Newton,‡ Chalmers, and other divines of the Church of England, to whose luminous works, the reader is referred for ample information on the subject: its object is, rather to exhibit briefly some of the collateral and direct benefits, which, under God, it is the powerful medium of conveying.

1. One beneficial circumstance attendant on our establishment is the parcelling out of a whole country, the government of which is professedly Christian, into certain districts, analogous to what are called parishes, and fixing in each of them a regularly-ordained minister, who by his office is

* Heb. ix. 9—12. † Ibid. ix. 11—15.

‡ Newton's Apologia.

Now let us for a moment suppose that the Establishment was annihilated, and all its provisions were withdrawn. What in all human probability would follow? Sixteen millions of souls, or upwards of eight tenths of the kingdom would be deprived at a stroke, of the very form of public religion, and reduced in a short time to a state of ignorance and heathenism. The voluntary system, as it is now the fashion to call it, cannot with all its resources, adequately relieve the spiritual necessities of the country at large. It has limits beyond which it cannot extend itself; however actively its influence may be exerted by its partisans. An affluent, literary, scientific, and commercial nation, like England, presents insurmountable obstacles to the general progress of voluntaryism. A vast numerical majority of the nobility, gentry, merchants, tradesmen, yeomanry, and commonalty of the land, are unalienably attached to the established Church, from an honest conviction of its intrinsic excellence and usefulness. No specious and sophistical arguments advanced by an infidel or radical press, no hollow promises of greater liberty and spiritual privileges to be enjoyed within the precincts of dissent, can ever prevail on the great bulk of the community to renounce a system of religion, which 'has God for its Author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter.'*

Besides, the plan so strenuously recommended,

* Locke.

weighed in the balances of reason and experience, and found wanting. The disorder, and violence, and hypocrisy, and injustice, and persecution and murder, which characterized the march of pretended religious liberty, during the usurpation of Cromwell; and the tragical and sanguinary events which followed the revolution in France, will continue to read instructive lessons, on the value of Christian establishments, which present and future generations are not likely to forget. Should we not, then, as rational accountable agents instructed by the past, steadfastly cleave to God and his truth for the future, lest, by a departure from his righteous ways, we should, like the Jewish nation, forfeit his protection, and provoke him to say, "This people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit! Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils; they have

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That sinews bought and sold have ever earned.
No: dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
Just estimation prized above all price,
I had much rather be myself the slave
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.
Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free,
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.
That is noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,
And let it circulate through every vein,
Of all your empire; that where Britain's power
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.'

Cowper's Task, Book II.

The Old and New Testaments are read through once a year, in portions, on the Lord's day, and other occasions. Thus, every attendant on divine worship, is furnished with the means of becoming wise unto salvation, "through faith which is in Christ Jesus." * Without this judicious ordinance, the bulk of the nation would perhaps in time become as ignorant of the Bible, as they are of the Koran, or of the superstitious mythologies of the Pagan world.

3. The benefit of a precomposed form of prayer is unquestionably great. Such formularies of praise and supplication were appointed by God, for the use of the Old Testament Church. When the ark set forward, and when it rested, Moses addressed Jehovah, not according to the varied emotions of his own mind, but statedly in the same determinate expressions.† So likewise in the solemn benediction which the High Priest was to pronounce upon the people.‡ Again, at the presenting of the first-fruits, though the heart of the offerer might be filled with gratitude, he was not allowed to express it in his own way, but the Lord himself prescribed the form of his acknowledgment, confession, and prayer. §

Christ has given his Church a most excellent and comprehensive form of prayer, adapted to all the various exercises of the life of faith. He hath directed us to use it upon all occasions, saying, "When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in

* 2 Tim. iii. 15.
† Numb. x. 35, 36.
‡ Numb. vi. 22—27.
§ Deut. xxvi. 1—19.

heaven, hallowed be thy name," &c. If scriptural warrant be required, we have in this admirable prayer one more clear and express, than can be found for some things, upon which no little stress is laid by the opponents of the Establishment. Let it not then be hastily concluded, that God cannot be "worshipped in spirit and in truth" by those, who use our invaluable Liturgy; or that, he will not afford them who so approach him, any testimony of his acceptance. If the words it contains forcibly express the desires and feelings of our minds, the prayer, thus presented to the Almighty, is as much our own, as if it were conceived by ourselves at the moment.

Many candid persons among Dissenters have allowed that the general strain of our Liturgy is scriptural, evangelical, and experimental: and with just reason; for 'it recognises with precision the one great object of worship, in his personal distinctions and glorious attributes; the honours and offices of the divine Redeemer of sinners, the power and agency of the Holy Spirit, the immense demerit of transgression, the depravity of mankind, and all the distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel. As to the composition, I question if any writing in the English language (our version of the Bible excepted,) is worthy of being compared with it, for simplicity, perspicuity, energy, and fulness of expression.'*

We conceive it to be next to an impossibility for

* Newton's Apologia.

serious Christians to join the congregation in using the prayers of the church, without feeling the animating glow of holy affections kindling in their bosoms; the humility, and contrition, and gratitude of a saint, with some degree of the sacred ardour of angels and archangels, and "of the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven." They are therefore a suitable accompaniment to the sermon, and an excellent preparative for it. Myriads of departed spirits in glory, and great multitudes in the church militant on earth, have offered up these devout supplications to God, and have found them to afford "the means of grace and the hope of glory" to their souls.

Let us also continually present these addresses to heaven, in a pious frame of mind, and they will animate our faith and hope in Christ, fill us with benevolence to men, and teach us how to "make our calling and election sure; so that an abundant entrance shall be administered to us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." *

4. Preaching the word of God, is another important benefit which the establishment dispenses to multitudes. And this is confessedly an ordinance of divine appointment, for the salvation of men. When Jesus, the supreme lawgiver of his Church, gave a divine commission to his apostles, and their faithful successors, it was expressed in the following terms; "Go ye into all the world,

* 2 Peter i. 10, 11.

and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."* Wherever the grand fundamental truth of "the Gospel is faithfully declared, it manifests itself to be the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth;" awakening the careless and profane from the slumber of iniquity, enlightening the ignorant, reclaiming the profligate and vicious, and guiding the wanderer from God, into the fold of heavenly bliss.

Thousands have an opportunity of hearing the Gospel at Church, who cannot be induced to attend and listen to it elsewhere. How desirable is it for their sakes, that "Christ and him crucified," should be constantly sounded forth from every pulpit, throughout our venerable establishment! That it is so proclaimed in thousands of instances, may be asserted without fear of contradiction; and should true piety and ministerial fidelity continue to increase in the Church, which we have no doubt they will, at the same rate as they have done, within the last forty years, the absence of the Gospel, with all its rich provisions and consolations, will form almost solitary exceptions to the character of our general ministrations.

5. The due administration of the sacraments in the Church, is fraught with benefit "to those who by faith, rightly and worthily receive the same."† By the expressive rite of Baptism,

* Mark xvi. 15, 16. † Articles.

which corresponds in its spiritual import and design with circumcision under the law, millions of infants are brought within the pale of the Christian Church, derive the benefit of holy ordinances, and are taught to pray earnestly for grace, in order that they may obtain a renewal of their minds in righteousness; so "that they may not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, manfully fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil, and continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto the end of their lives." * The Lord's Supper, which is celebrated monthly in cities and towns, and at stated times in our parish churches, is a devout memorial of our Saviour's death and atonement, exhibited under the significant emblems of bread and wine; the former, to denote the laceration of his body by the act of crucifixion,—the latter to represent his blood profusely shed for our redemption. In this light it was set forth by Christ himself, when he instituted the holy sacrament. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave to the disciples, and said, take eat; this is (a figurative representation of) my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament (or covenant) which is shed for many for the remission of sins." †

The celebration of the Lord's Supper is intended, not only as an affecting exhibition of

* Baptismal Service. † Matt. xxvi. 26—29.

Christ's unparalleled love to his people; but an assertion also of the all-efficacious nature of his sacrifice; as that capital article of the Christian economy, in which we must believe, as the only means of obtaining pardon and reconciliation with our offended God. By the symbols of bread and wine, which make a direct appeal to our senses, "Christ is evidently set forth after a spiritual manner, before our eyes, crucified amongst us."* The sacrament was designed as a commemorative rite, and all true believers are expressly commanded to observe it, "in remembrance" of Him; that is, to testify their gratitude and affection to their adorable Lord, "by shewing forth his death till he come," to exalt them to thrones of glory in his kingdom above.†

The Church of England thus plainly describes the necessary qualifications to be possessed "by those who come to receive the holy communion," at the hands of her priests. "Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking henceforth in his holy ways; draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort."‡ Such recipients "are strengthened and refreshed in their souls by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the use of bread and wine." § But they who partake of the Lord's Supper merely as a passport to office,

* Gal. iii. 1.
† 1 Cor. xi. 23—26.
‡ Communion Service.
§ Catechism.

or to allay the qualms of a guilty conscience, or to compound for unrepented sin, without regard to the satisfaction of Christ, "are guilty of desecrating the body and blood of the Lord, and of eating and drinking damnation to themselves." *

Now, whatever "wicked and unreasonable men," whose minds are blinded and perverted by Satan, may assert to the contrary, a Christian establishment which propounds and maintains the religion of Jesus, is not only of great estimation in God's sight, for we are assured that "the Lord loveth the gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob; he hath chosen, yea, hath desired it for his habitation; saying, this is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein;" † but is also an object of just admiration to all pious and virtuous persons, who highly value it, as the faithful conservatrix of divine truth, and the promoter of real felicity, both in time and in eternity.

* 1 Cor. xi. 27—30. † Psalm lxxxvii. 1, 2; cxxxii. 13—15.

CHAPTER III.

By her scriptural creed she seems to be peculiarly "set for the defence of the gospel of Christ," for the establishment of truth, and the confutation of error. Heresy blushes and hides its deformed head before the light and illumination of her doctrines. When there is no recognized standard of faith, the munitions of Christianity are weakened, and "the enemy of souls is, as it were, invited to sow tares among the precious wheat."* In America, the land of imaginary delights, to which we are directed to turn our eyes for perfection in religion and politics, we observe the mischievous effects of a spurious liberality, in the destructive growth of infidelity, Socinianism, Romanism, Sectarianism, and every grade of pestilential error.†

Nor are the most painful instances wanting of the same occurrence of mischiefs in our own favoured land; occasioned by the neglect of setting up a specific standard of faith, as a beacon to guard against the encroachments of perverted reason. Hundreds of pulpits, from which at no

* Matt. xiii. 24—26. † Marryat's Diary in America.

very remote period, the life-giving sound of the gospel issued, are now occupied by men, who publish the soul-destroying heresy of Socinianism. They have contrived to evade the force of documents and instruments, in order to get possession of places of worship, which were founded and endowed for the benevolent purpose of maintaining the truth of Christ's holy religion.

Now the Church of England, though not a perfect institution (for what Church, or human system, on earth, can boast of the attribute of unsullied perfection) will bear the most rigid scrutiny as to her constitution, doctrines, and usefulness, and be cordially approved of by all unprejudiced and candid judges. She has intrinsic and manifest excellences peculiar to herself, which greatly outbalance her defects. Like the grand luminary of heaven, she has spots on her surface, which partially obscure her beauty, but do not destroy her light and influence.

Her past utility as the vehicle of scriptural truth and salvation to millions of immortal spirits, may be safely pleaded in her defence, notwithstanding all the captious objections and calumnies of her adversaries, whom no arguments, however forcible can satisfy, nor any demonstrations however plain, can convince or silence.

The important and arduous task of defending "the truth, as it is in Jesus," has been principally undertaken by the Church. From the reformation down to the present time, she has successfully combated those who have unceasingly sought,

like Elymas, " to pervert the right ways of the Lord."* Popery, with all her imposing attire, and claims to infallibility, has been fully exposed, as an idolatrous perversion of the Gospel, which is a system of lies that panders to the pride and ambition of a corrupt hierarchy, and at the same time enslaves its deluded votaries, with the galling chains of superstition, ignorance, and vice. " Whilst they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption, for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage."† Infidelity and scepticism have fled discomfited and foiled in its attempts to poison the springs of human felicity, and to rob men of the bright hope of eternal glory; by teaching them " to say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." " What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?"‡ If then, papistical error, and infidel licentiousness, with all their dire concomitants, have not desolated Christendom with crime and lamentation, and woe; if the Christian religion, with all its provisions to comfort us in this vale of sorrow, and to inspire us with a sweet expectation of a blissful immortality beyond the skies, still continues amongst us, we owe it primarily to the superintending care of God in preserving his ark securely amidst the storms of life; but secondarily, to the piety, and talent, and learning, and wisdom

* Acts xiii. 10. † 2 Peter ii. 19. ‡ Job xxi. 14—16.

of his favoured servants, who have been raised up as suitable instruments to achieve such splendid victories. "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of" Cranmer, and Latimer, and Ridley, and others, who have lighted up a fire of Christian knowledge and zeal, that will never be extinguished within these realms. Shall we soon forget our obligations to our Hookers, and Jewels and Stillingfleets, and Pearsons, and Chillingworths, and Usshers, and Leightons, and Halls, and a multitude of brave defenders of the faith, who, by scriptural arguments and sound learning, have put to flight the armies of Satan, and established the truth of Christ on an immoveable basis, which cannot be thrown down. When an hostile army is approaching, it is sometimes of the utmost importance, to defend bravely the outposts; lest the camp should be surprised by the sudden irruption of the enemy. For the same reason, 'a lettered and intellectual Church' is requisite to guard the avenues of truth, as well as to inspire those, whose duty it is to proclaim it to the nation, by their more public ministrations, with fortitude and zeal.

'It is to the learning of the priesthood,' observes Dr. Chalmers, 'that Christianity has kept her ground on the high platform of cultivated and well-educated humanity, and that she enters so largely as a bright and much-esteemed ingredient into the body of our national literature. It is well when this degree of respect and acknowledgment can be obtained for her among the upper classes

The value of our establishment was conspicuously displayed at the eventful era of the French revolution. A set of men calling themselves philosophers, but in reality the agents of Satan, having cast off all just notions of their responsibility to God, proceeded, without remorse, to the commission of crimes at which humanity shudders. At one fell blow, they razed the altar and the throne; murdering their king and queen, they set up a Republican Government, which filled the country with the blood of its best subjects. Life and property were insecure under the reign of terror. To complete the last part of this direful tragedy, the Theophilanthropists, as they were falsely called, put down the least semblance of religion, by adoring the goddess of reason as the only object of their worship. Not satisfied with corrupting themselves, they sent forth the apostles of infidelity to sow their pestiferous doctrines throughout Europe, which was successively prostrated before them. Had God permitted this land of liberty to fall into their hands, the same acts of violence would have desolated our borders. England, by the facilities which her contiguity to unhappy France afforded, was in great danger of imbibing her poisonous sentiments both in religion and politics. Jehovah however, graciously preserved the nation from the general devastation which followed the march of infidelity, and inspired a holy band to stand forth as the advocates of truth, against error, of righteousness, against immorality and vice. The Church of England put

on her armour for the battle, and by her able defence of the Gospel, defeated the malevolent designs of the enemies of Christ.

She was for many years the precursor in the holy cause of missions, to propagate Christian knowledge among the unenlightened heathen. A Swartz, a Brainerd, and a Gericke, and others, fired with an ardent love of souls, planted the tree of life in India, which has raised its majestic head to the skies, and extended its branches far and wide; so that the inhabitants of that vast continent come and take refuge under its peaceful shade.

Though far too tardy in obeying the high commands of her Lord "to go and preach the gospel to every creature," she has at length awoke to a proper sense of her duty and privilege. She has thrust forth labourers into every part of Christ's vineyard. From east to west, from north to south, she is sending forth the heralds of mercy to proclaim salvation to a ruined world. Thus it may be said with regard to her labours of love, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth."*

1. The venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the first missionary institution formed in Great Britain, was established in the year 1698,

* Isaiah lii. 7.

and is composed of a President, Vice-Presidents, a Committee, Treasurer, Secretary, and of subscribing and corresponding members. The former hold regular meetings, and transact the general business of the Society. The latter are such persons in England, Ireland, and other Protestant countries, as are chosen to communicate with the Society on the state of religion in their neighbourhoods, to suggest such methods of doing good as occur to them, to distribute Bibles and Testaments, and other books recommended by the Society, and to remit occasional or stated contributions.

Under the patronage of this excellent institution at home, a grand national central school has been established in London, in which not only youth, but adult male and female teachers are duly trained and qualified to conduct weekly and Sunday charity schools, throughout the land. In these nurseries of religion, the principles of the Christian system are taught to more than two millions of scholars, who are instructed "to honour all men, to love the brotherhood, to fear God, and honour the King."* The society's income now amounts to the large sum of £95,017. 16s. 1d.

2. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, appears to have grown out of the forementioned institution, and was established in the year 1701. It is governed like that, by officers of a similar description, consisting of the

* 1 Peter ii. 17.

Archbishop of Canterbury as its head, and other dignitaries and ministers of the Church. Its funds are rapidly improving, and reached last year, to the amount of nearly £40,000. The avowed object of this society is limited by Royal Charter to foreign countries, and more especially to the plantations, colonies, and factories, beyond the seas, belonging to the British empire. Missionaries, catechists, and schoolmasters, are employed by it in the West Indies, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Upper and Lower Canada, Cape Breton, the Bahama Islands, the coast of Africa, New South Wales, and Norfolk Island. The missionaries, who are admirably qualified to "do the work of Evangelists, and to make full proof of their ministry,"* are supplied by the society with books for a library, and Bibles and Testaments, and Prayer-books, and religious tracts for distribution among their people, as occasions may require.

These institutions are directed entirely by members of the established Church.

3. The Naval and Military Bible Society, formed in 1780, was expressly instituted for the sole use of the Army and Navy of Great Britain. It circulates only the scriptures of the authorized version. By the aid of annual subscriptions, and collections made at different places of worship, its committee have been enabled to distribute among the regiments and ships specified in

* 2 Tim. iv. 5.

their printed Report, a considerable number of Bibles and Testaments.

4. The Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East, though last, is not least in following the steps of its venerable predecessors; it was established in the year 1800. It is conducted, like them, exclusively by zealous members of the Church of England, with similar officers to execute its laudable designs. It has the sanction and support of twelve bishops, about two thousand clergymen, and a considerable portion of the nobility, gentry, tradespeople, and commonalty of the land. The receipts of the year 1840 amounted to the magnificent sum of £100,252 6s. 2d. This society, not confined in its operations, embraces, as far as its resources will admit, the four grand-divisions of the world, as the theatre of its well-directed exertions. It has missions in West Africa and South Africa; in the Mediterranean, Egypt, Abyssinia; in North India and South India, and in Western India; in Ceylon, and Australia; in the West Indies, and in North America.

General Summary of the Mission.

Stations	97	
European Missionaries	103	
Native and Country-born Missionaries	9	
European Catechists and other Laymen	71	
European Female Teachers	5	
Native and Country-born Teachers	977	
Communicants	4603	
Attendants on Public Worship	66,493	
Schools	696	
Scholars—Boys		15,289
Girls		5,900
Sex not distinguished		8,561
Youths and adults		5,646
	Total	35,396

5. The Church Pastoral-Aid Society was called into action in the year 1836. It had its origin in the manifest wants of the Church, and has, by God's blessing, been extensively useful in supplying means for meeting the necessity. Its chief and important design is "the salvation of souls, with a single eye to the glory of God, and in humble dependance on his blessing, by granting aid toward maintaining faithful and devoted men to assist incumbents of parishes in their pastoral charge." It has already aided 277 incumbents, having a population under their charge of 2,000,000. The income of the society for 1840-41, was £19,655 16s. 5d. Nearly one-half of the episcopal bench, several of the nobility and gentry, and many of the clergy and laity support this valuable institution in its laudable endeavours to render the Church more effective for national usefulness.

6. The Additional Curates' Society, for affording curates to necessitous clergymen with small incomes and large parishes, was instituted a few years ago. It has obtained the sanction of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and the whole bench of Bishops; and will, when its resources are increased, be of eminent service in furnishing augmented strength for working more successfully the great machine of the Established Church.*

By the combined efforts of these and similar

* See the annual Reports of the various Christian societies mentioned above.

christian institutions, we hope that it will please God, at no very remote period, to demolish the kingdom of Satan, and to erect the universal empire of his blessed Son on its ruins. Let each of them shine as spiritual luminaries in their respective orbits, reflecting the light of Christ, "the Sun of righteousness;" and, going forth cheerfully to illuminate, with the bright rays of divine truth, "all the habitations of darkness and cruelty;" until the sublime vision of prophecy is realized, which declares, that the Gospel shall convert the depravity and ferocity of the world, into integrity, and benevolence, and love; so that men "shall not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."* Whilst then unhallowed rivalry and contention are laid aside, let all the great societies cultivate a spirit of harmony and Christian love. Should any jealousy arise, let it be instantly suppressed by the adoption of the same conciliatory tempers shewed by Abraham towards Lot—"Let there be no strife I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."†

* Isaiah xi. 9.

† Gen. xiii. 5—10. Since these lines were penned, the author is happy to observe, that a coalition has been formed between the two great Church Missionary Societies, for which "we thank God and

Let the conductors, agents, and supporters of these Societies constantly invoke the Spirit of Christ to descend upon them, that they may effectually promote the extension of his righteous kingdom, and draw down the richest blessings on their own heads. "And the glorious Majesty of the Lord our God be upon them; prosper thou the work of their hands upon them, O prosper thou their handy work." *

The Church of England has not only been a mighty instrument in the hands of God for maintaining and propagating the knowledge of his word in the world, and checking the progress of infidelity; but she has been greatly honoured by him also in raising up for himself "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that they might shew forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel." †

From the earliest period of her establishment, at the reformation, she has had within her pale, "a noble army of martyrs" who have cheerfully embraced death in its most formidable shapes, rather than renounce the truth;—a numerous list of intelligent confessors, "who counted not their lives dear unto themselves, so that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God;" ‡ in fine,

take courage;" hoping that this concentration of Christian effort will be productive of the greatest advantage to the heathen world.

* Psalm xc. 16, 17. † 1 Peter ii. 9. ‡ Acts xx. 24.

by the ministerial labours of her faithful servants, she has not only "kept that form of sound words, which was committed to her trust;"* but has brought a great multitude, "which no man can number," into the fold of Christ, which, after having glorified him on earth, were translated to heaven, where they are clothed with white robes of righteousness and have palms of victory in their hands. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his holy temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to fountains of living waters; and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes."† The Church then, has "an innumerable company of glorified saints and the spirits of just men made perfect," as vouchers of her past fidelity and usefulness; she is "compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses,"‡ stretching forth from the battlements of heaven, as spectators of her righteous course, and calling loudly to her ministers, and the flocks committed to their charge, "be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."§

And what is the position which she now quietly maintains? What is the spectacle she now ex-

* 1 Tim. i. 13. † Rev. vii. 9—17. ‡ Heb. xii. 1.
§ 1 Cor. xv. 58.

corporal and intellectual strength in the righteous cause in which they have embarked. Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts, who has promised that his "word shall not return unto him void, but accomplish his pleasure, and prosper in the thing whereto he sends it,"* vouchsafes his blessing abundantly on the "good seed sown" by his ministers, which vegetates and takes deep root in the hearts of many of their hearers, and "brings forth fruit to everlasting life,—in some an hundred fold, some sixty, and some thirty."† Christ "gives testimony to the word of his grace," and the Holy Spirit applies it efficaciously to the souls of men; and the consequence is, that some of every class of transgressors "repent and believe the Gospel," to the saving of their souls. Then the drunkard becomes sober and forsakes the intoxicating cup; the sensual and voluptuous are made chaste, and abandon their criminal pleasures, to seek happiness in God alone;—the carnal become "spiritually minded" and attain "life and peace,"‡ the infidel and the profligate are reclaimed;—the covetous, no longer worshipping their golden idols, liberally communicate their earthly treasure to the indigent; that they may obtain "the unsearchable riches of Christ;" yea, even those, whose conduct previous to their conversion was not marked by any flagrant immorality, receive a new impression of character altogether appropriate to men born of God: the self

* Isa. lv. 8—12. † Matt. xiii. 23. ‡ Rom. viii. 6.

complacent formalist who goes through a heartless routine of ceremonious observances, renounces all dependance on them for acceptance, to attain the vital and transforming power of "godliness, which is profitable for all things, having promise of this life and that which is to come."* The hypocrite who has put on deceptive appearances, in order to impose upon the unsuspecting, and accomplish his base designs, as soon as he feels the resistless energy of divine truth, pulls off his abominable mask, and is constrained "to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with his God."† In a word, the proud self-justifying Pharisee, who boasts of his good and charitable deeds, as if they made God his debtor, whilst he is unconscious of that impiety of heart which he abhors, is convinced of his guilt, under a preached Gospel, made to renounce his own supposed righteousness, to trust exclusively in the superlative merits of Christ for justification; and to smite, in consternation, on his breast in token of unfeigned repentance, crying, in the impassioned language of his heart, "God be merciful to me a sinner."‡

But some, prejudiced by a blind partisanship, which excludes the light of candour from their minds, will incredulously ask, 'Are such real or pretended converts? And where are they to be found?' I answer, in every church in England where her devoted ministers faithfully publish

* 1 Tim. iv. 8. † Micah vi. 8. ‡ Luke xviii. 13.

"the everlasting gospel," as contained in the doctrinal sentiments of her scriptural Articles and Homilies. Unless the writer of these pages has been labouring under a *deceptio visûs*, which disqualifies him from forming a tolerably correct judgment on the subject, he has discovered during upwards of thirty years, in which he has laboured (though imperfectly) within her pale, thousands and tens of thousands of sincere upright Christians, with whom it is both an honour and a privilege to associate. 'But in what ranks and grades of society are such persons to be seen?' The answer is easy; amongst all ranks and conditions of men, from the crowned monarch, to the coronetted nobleman, from the mitred Bishop, to the humblest sheep of Christ's flock, from the exalted gentry of the land, to the meanest servant; yea, what is a still more convincing proof of the Church's excellence (though not without a serious drawback) not a solitary few of those teachers and their congregations who have causelessly forsaken her communion, and avow the most deadly rancour against her, are constrained to confess that their first religious impressions and advantages are to be solely attributed to her pious and efficient ministrations. Is it not then the basest ingratitude to load our benefactors with reproaches? to traduce and vilify a Church, which God has used, and still uses, to confer upon us the most substantial blessings both for time and eternity?' May we not ask, in utter astonishment, "is this your kindness to your friend! why went ye not with

your friend?" * Is it a discriminating mark of enlightened piety, and true evangelical wisdom, and desire for the extension of Christ's spiritual kingdom, to assail that Church "which the king delighteth to honour." †

And yet, we are tauntingly insulted by some, whose ignorance is as conspicuous as their enthusiasm and laxity of morals, who say, 'Of what use is it to attend her ordinances; "for salvation is not to be obtained within her walls and bulwarks;" ‡ by others, who falsely assert, 'it is not lawful to hold communion with her; because, after the example of the first religious establishment by the Lord himself, she is connected, by his good providence, with the state. It is sufficient to intreat such calumniators, since they force us to the invidious comparison, to make an honest appeal to the lives and conversation of that goodly multitude of Christians within the pale of our Church, for a confutation of every slander which prejudice and misconception can furnish. Look at the principles and practice, the faith and love, the joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance, zeal, benevolence, and every virtue which adorns her real members; and then tell us, whether their piety, either for its real excellence, or utility, is surpassed by the fruits of any body of religionists throughout Christendom. We say then, to her scornful enemies, not in a spirit of undue exultation, but in just defence of her

* 2 Sam. xvi. 17. † Esther vi. 11. ‡ Isa. xxvi. 1.

claims to universal admiration, "walk about Sion, and go round about her, and tell the towers thereof. Mark well her bulwarks, set up her houses; that ye may tell it to the generations following. God is well known in her palaces as a sure refuge. For this God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our guide even unto death."* "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be (or who can prevail) against us."†

* Psalm xlviii. 12—14. † Romans viii. 31.

CHAPTER IV.

THE IMPROVING CONDITION OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

I cannot suppose that any true Christian in our land of light and liberty, will hesitate for a moment to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the one infallible, authoritative Legislator and Governor of his Church; that he is the only Lord of conscience, and that nothing inconsistent with his revealed will should be practised, and nothing which he has enjoined be omitted by those who profess allegiance to him. But, however generally acknowledged these principles are, I believe the misconstruction and misapplication of them have contributed more to divide the people of God, and to alienate their affections from each other, than any cause that can be assigned. It should seem reasonable to expect, that they, whose hopes are built upon the same foundation, who are led by the same spirit of grace, who are opposed by the same enemies, and interested in the same promises of salvation, would look on each other with mutual complacency, would love as brethren, would "bear each other's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," * and copy his heavenly

* Gal. vi. 2.

example. But, alas! an unhallowed and mistaken zeal for his honour, fills them on all sides with animosity against their fellow-disciples, splits them into a thousand parties, gives rise to fierce and endless contentions, and makes them so earnest for their own, and against the respective peculiarities of others, that love which is the discriminating characteristic of the followers of Jesus is scarcely to be found among them in such a degree of exercise, as to satisfy even candid observers, whether they bear his distinctive mark or not. But whatever may be the non-essential differences of real Christians, they will be guilty of a culpable omission, if they forget the positive duty enforced upon them by the Head of the Church; "love one another." "By this shall all men know, that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."*

Now the visible Church of Christ comprises all who call themselves by his name, and who profess to receive his Gospel as a divine revelation. It is a wide floor, on which the grain and chaff are promiscuously mingled; a field, in which "the wheat and the tares will grow together, until the time of harvest;" a spacious "net inclosing a multitude of fishes both good and bad."† But the visible Church, taken in this large extent, is not, strictly speaking, the proper subject of his kingdom, since he is emphatically styled "the King of Saints."‡ Moreover, his "kingdom is not of this world;"§ but, like his absolute au-

* John xiii. 35. † Matt. xiii. 47—51. ‡ Rev. xv. 3.
§ John xviii. 36.

thority is spiritual, which men cannot understand or receive, or obey, until γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν they are born from above,* and made new creatures by the renovating power of his Holy Spirit. Christ peremptorily affirms by a solemn asseveration, from which there is no appeal, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."† If such regenerated persons only are true members of Christ's mystical body, who, it is to be feared, are seldom the largest number in any denomination, if these be considered as detached from the outward visible Church, then the rest is a mere *caput mortuum*, differenced from "the world which lieth in wickedness," in nothing but a name, and in the privilege of having the oracles of God committed to it. But, what a different aspect will the Church of Christ present in its triumphant state in heaven? Purified from all sin and imperfection, "he will present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; that it may be holy and without blemish."‡ There will be no contention, no sectarianism, "no schism in the body." "Christ will not be divided;" nor will those who have been saved by his blood arrange themselves under any name or distinction as of "Paul or Apollos, or Cephas;"§ but Jesus as the Redeemer of his saints, will receive their unanimous fealty, affection, and gratitude; a spirit of everlasting concord will per-

* John iii. 3.
† Ibid iii. 3.
‡ Eph. v. 26, 27.
§ 1 Cor. i. 12, 13.

unto the ransomed throng, and because they will be completely holy, they will all be perfectly happy; saying, without a single discordant voice, "unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." * Should not every professed Christian sincerely pray that he may now be actuated by the same dispositions which animate the inhabitants of heaven, where "the unity of the Spirit is cemented with the bond of peace." †

We are happy in being able to mark a decided improvement and general growth of available piety, both amongst the members and ministers of the Church of England, within the last thirty or forty years, particularly with regard to the more scriptural tone of preaching, commonly adopted by them, and the more evangelical cast of those religious publications, which are issued from the press. We hope that the complaints of former days are no longer applicable to the great body of the clergy, "that the ethics of Aristotle, and the insipid pagan morality of Cicero and Epictetus, usurp the place of the verities of the gospel of God." And what was the effect of such preachments upon the audience? the result is graphically described by our inimitable poet—

'The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But swoll'n with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread.'

Milton's Lycidas in Paradise Regained.

* Rev. i. 5, 6.

† Eph. iv. 3.

Thank God, a better order of things now prevails almost universally in our pulpits. The holy resolution of thousands, who minister at our altars, is similar to that of the blessed Apostle, St. Paul; "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified;" in order that the faith of their people should not stand "in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." * The cross is the all-absorbing theme—the sum and substance of their ministrations. And what is the consequence; but such as Jehovah avows shall follow the faithful annunciation of his word? "The flock which Christ has purchased with his blood," is fed with the bread of eternal life; the spiritually-diseased are strengthened, the sick are healed, that which was broken is bound up, that which was driven away is brought back to the heavenly fold; that which was lost, is sought after, and saved."†

2. It was therefore natural to expect, from the superior talents and piety, the zeal, and diligence of such numbers of the clergy, that a large accession of faithful believers, enlightened and devoted Christians, useful and good members of society, should grow up under the fostering care of Church and State, as would tend to glorify Christ by their faith and obedience, and to assist in diffusing the benefits of his religion throughout the world.

And this improvement in doctrine, life, and ministerial fidelity, has produced a most striking

* 1 Cor. ii. 9. † Ezek. xxxiv. 4.

change in the sentiments and style of their compositions and writings. The generality of their published sermons, treatises, and works, are no longer characterized by crude metaphysical discussions, and barren generalities, meagre and scanty statements of Christian truth and morals, but by faithful and accurate descriptions of the leading tenets and duties of the gospel of Christ, which is the "power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."* Numerous publications issue annually from the press, from the ponderous tome, to the portable octavo, and downwards, to the smallest pamphlets and tracts; at once adapted to establish and defend the truth, as it is in Christ, to edify the Church, to convey instruction to the lost, and consolation to the saints of the Most High. Hence the great bulk of those who resort to our national churches, decidedly prefer those discourses which savour most strongly of evangelical doctrines, which alone can make them "wise unto salvation, by faith;" create holy affections in the soul, give a prelibation of eternal joy, and lead to the endless fruition of it in the realms of glory. When we contemplate this great revolution in sentiment and practice, we may allowedly exclaim, "behold what hath God wrought;" † to Him be all the glory of a work, which it is the exclusive prerogative of Omnipotence to effect.

3. This general spread and revival of true piety

* Rom. i. 16.

† Numb. xxiii. 23.

and zeal in the Church, is conspicuous in larger views of her obligations to God and man; in increased efforts, upon an extensive scale, to diffuse Christian knowledge throughout the whole habitable globe. It is now recognized as an indispensable duty to establish Missions, not only in our colonies, but in every part of the heathen world. The two great missionary societies, in connection with the Church of England, claim the devout regard and strenuous support of all her members. Like bodies destined to attain perfection by imperceptible degrees, like the stately oak, the king of the forest, which advances slowly from the acorn to gigantic maturity; so these heralds of light and salvation, gradual and steady in their growth, from small beginnings, have at length acquired a gigantic stature, beautiful for symmetry, and mighty in action, to accomplish their benevolent designs. Like the prophetic little cloud, which at first appeared about the bigness of a man's hand, covering the whole heavens with sackcloth, and causing an abundant rain to irrigate the parched land, and fill it with plenteousness and joy; these blessed institutions go forth embracing, with extended arms, the whole earth, and refreshing them with the fertilizing showers of mercy and peace.

Wherever they go, they erect the standard of the cross of Christ, and bid men joyfully look on Him who hung upon it, for pardon and eternal life. They point "the weary and heavy laden," to the tree of life, under which they gladly repose,

and gather its precious fruits, "which are for the healing of the nations."* From the uttermost boundaries of the world we hear songs of gratitude and glory to God most high; † who remarkably blesses their vast operations; from the borders of the extensive empire of China, throughout the whole breadth and length of Hindostan; from Egypt, Abyssinia, and the Mediterranean isles; from the northern and southern coasts of afflicted Africa, to the Cape of Good Hope; from the remotest limits of North America, to Upper and Lower Canada, and the West Indies, and from Australia to New Zealand, the benign effects of our missions have been powerfully felt. In all these the wonder-working hand of God has been visibly seen, "pulling down the strongholds and fortifications of Satan, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."‡

4. Contemplate the useful and extensive machinery put in motion by these societies, and see how nicely it is adapted to relieve the wants and miseries of the heathen, who are "perishing for lack of that Christian knowledge,"§ which it has the means of supplying; these are the great moral fulcrum and the lever, which fixed on the centre of the kingdoms of the prince of darkness, are capable, by the divine blessing, of heaving them up from the lowest state of spiritual death and

* Rev. xxii. 2.
† Isa. xxiv. 15, 16.
‡ 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.
§ Hosea iv. 6.

ignorance, to the heights of celestial life and happiness. And if "the conversion of one sinner that repenteth," * is enough to fill the angelic throng with the most ecstatic joy! oh, what transports of exultation—what acclamations of praise and thanksgiving will rend the immense vault of heaven, when the "lost sheep of the house of Israel shall return to God," and "the fulness of the Gentiles come" † into Christ's Church; when the Asiatic and the European, the American, and sabled African, "shall stretch out their hands" ‡ in covenant with God, and glorify his mercy and love! Then "the mystery of God will be finished" in the destruction of the eastern and western antichrists, § and the Apocalyptic vision of St. John be fulfilled, by the declarations of the angels surrounding the throne of God, and saying, "Hallelujah, salvation to God, and the Lamb; ‖ for the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

The Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and the Church Missionary Society for missions to Africa and the East, conjointly occupy about 180 stations and settlements, and employ about 540 regularly-ordained ministers, and about 1050 catechists and teachers, who are engaged in their various departments in disseminating "the word of life, the gospel of our salvation."

In every district of a settlement, in every town

* Luke xv. 10. † Rom. xi. 25. ‡ Psalm lxviii. 31.
§ Rev. x. 7. ‖ Ibid. xi. 15.

and village, churches are erected, in which divine worship is conducted according to the rites of the Church of England; schools have been founded, for the instruction of adults, youths, and infants, in the knowledge of Jesus ;—masters, mistresses, and teachers are employed, containing a considerable number of scholars, amounting to about 80,000. The churches are filled with devout worshippers, hanging on the lips of their ministers, to catch "the joyful sound of salvation," and to sing "hosannahs to the Son of David, saying, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord ; hosannah in the highest." * The number of communicants who statedly attend the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, is considerable. To repair the waste of missionary life occasioned by the insalubrity and deteriorating effect of the different climates, upon European constitutions,—colleges and seminaries, and Christian institutions, have been constructed ; in which native converts, both old and young, are trained in the principles of the Church, qualified by every necessary branch of learning, to assist and co-operate with the missionaries, in "their work of faith and labour of love," to evangelize their benighted countrymen and the world. And, at no distant period we believe, that when God shall give the word, so great will be the company of native preachers, raised up in these Christian nurseries, to publish it, that all the ends of the earth, through their instrumentality, shall see the salvation of God.†

* Matt. xxi. 9. † Isa. lii. 10.

5. Encouraged by the laudable example of our first great national societies, kindred institutions with similar objects have been formed in America, and England, and Scotland; who have caught the generous impulse, and poured forth their sacred bands to illuminate the regions of darkness and death. "But what are they among so many?" What is one herald of mercy to a million of idolaters? As yet three-fourths out of 800 or 1000 millions of men, women, and children, among the lost heathen, are still, in the nineteenth century, after the establishment of Christianity, without any distinct knowledge of the God who made them; of the Saviour who redeemed them with his precious blood; of the Holy Spirit, "the Lord and giver of life," "who sanctifieth us and all the elect people of God;" *—the slaves of vice and superstition, lashed by the compunctious visitations of a "wounded conscience;" † the sport of Satan, harassed with doubts regarding a future state, under the constant terror of death, and afraid to launch forth into an unknown and dread eternity, "with all their sins and imperfections on their heads."

And is this melancholy and appalling aspect of the heathen world to be ascribed to the criminal apathy and indifference of Christians,—who have suffered hundreds and thousands, and countless millions, of unenlightened Pagans, to perish eternally, with accumulated guilt upon their souls?

* Catechism.

† Prov. xviii. 14.

If Cain was avenged of God for killing his righteous brother Abel, a voice loud as thunder from Asia and Africa's ground, will cry to God against those who have by their neglect to obey the divine command,* fearlessly murdered the souls of their poor heathen brethren, without making one adequate effort to save them.

To make some inadequate atonement to the offended Majesty of heaven, (which may He in mercy accept,) for past criminality; let us now awake from our unchristian sloth and insensibility; and clothed with the strength of our God, stretch forth our hands, to bless and comfort our perishing fellow-creatures. Let us even now open our eyes and contemplate the terrific spectacle of immense multitudes dying in unrepented sin and guilt; let us open our ears and listen to the importunate cry, which is wafted to our shores from Japan to Britain, from North to South America, from New Holland to the Australian isles, imploring our aid, and saying, like the men of Macedonia, "Come over and help us,"† bring us, on the wings of faith and love, the Gospel which you have found to be "the power of God unto salvation;" in a word, impart to us freely some crumbs of the bread of life, which was sent down from heaven, not to be selfishly monopolized, but to be broken and distributed among all the famished nations of the earth.

If then we can contentedly leave unenlightened

* Mark xvi. 15. † Acts xvi. 10.

nations to their dreadful fate, where is our compassion to our wretched fellow-creatures? Where is our mercy and charity, if we refuse to communicate to them the knowledge of God? Where is our philanthropy, if we suffer so large a portion of the world to continue in gross darkness? Where is our love to our blessed Saviour, if we remain indifferent to those spiritual benefits which he died on the cross to purchase? Where is our desire for the extension of our invaluable Church, if we strive not to make her doctrines known in heathen lands? Where is our patriotism, if we have no wish to bind up our country with the prayers and benedictions of mankind? If we stop our ears against the cries of the pagan world, how shall we escape the guilt of having suffered those to perish, from whom we have withheld "the means of grace, and the hope of everlasting glory?" *

6. The signal blessing of the Lord of heaven has been vouchsafed on our two Missionary Societies. In the Indies, in Africa, in Asia, and America, and New Zealand, "the word of the Lord has had free course and been glorified." The missionaries have scattered profusely the seed of eternal life amongst the heathen, and a bountiful harvest of true converts has been reaped. Multitudes "have cast their idols of silver and gold which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and bats." † Instead of altars polluted with the blood of human victims,

* Liturgy of the Church of England. † Isa. ii. 20.

they have erected temples devoted to the service of the true God, whose name and perfections are honoured amongst them. Instead of presenting sacrifices to Satan to propitiate his favour, and deprecate his wrath, their fervent supplications are directed to Christ their Saviour, " who hath delivered them from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."* Instead of the ignorance and vices which pagan superstition generates, all the virtues and graces of the Divine Spirit flourish and abound amongst them. Barbarous customs have been exploded, and have given place to the benevolent genius of Christianity, which will soon teach them to provide hospitals for the reception of the sick; asylums for the wretched and the needy, and schools for the instruction of the poor.

But we must look at New Zealand for a proof of the resistless efficacy of the word of God, both to civilize and evangelize the world, and for a satisfactory confutation of all the groundless objections which a heartless philosophy can urge against missions. There, a savage race of cannibals, who, but thirty years ago, could glut its insatiate appetite with the blood and flesh of captives taken in war, is now generally renouncing a custom, as abhorrent to reason and humanity, as to the dictates of the Christian religion. After having almost desolated their beautiful country, by exterminating conflicts, they sigh for peace and the

* Rom. viii. 21.

cultivation of the useful arts. The peaceful plow is substituted for the destructive sword. The tyrannical yoke of Satan is solemnly abjured by many of them, who henceforth desire to live under the pacific dominion of Jesus Christ; "that they might shew forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light"* to make them partakers of his everlasting kingdom.

In almost every place where our missionaries have laboured amongst the heathen, their prejudices are gradually yielding to the force of Christian truth; and a strong conviction of its importance has taken such deep root in their minds, as is likely, with the divine blessing, shortly to subvert the very foundation on which paganism is built.

When therefore we consider the success which has been already vouchsafed to the cause of missions, and the bright prospect which prophecy affords us of the future moral regeneration and happiness of the world, "we should thank God, and take courage;"† "Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness; and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

Finally; in this exalted work of charity, the felicity of countless myriads is deeply concerned; the salvation of but one of which, is of sufficient consequence to justify any expence, sacrifice, or exertion, that can be made in its behalf.

* 2 Peter. ii. 9. † Acts xxviii. 5.

'Know'st thou the importance of a soul immortal?
Behold this midnight glory! worlds on worlds.
Amazing pomp: redouble this amaze:
Ten thousand add: add twice ten thousand more;
Then weigh the whole; one soul outweighs them all;
And calls the astonishing magnificence of unintelligent creation poor.'

Young's Night Thoughts.

CHAPTER V.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

The striking revival and diffusion of evangelical knowledge before alluded to, amongst the clergy and laity, have produced other benefits in addition to those already noticed. Not only have available efforts been made to enlarge the borders of Christ's kingdom abroad with great success, but new religious institutions have been formed, and old ones invigorated at home with fresh energy and zeal. These are marching triumphantly through the populous districts of our own country, and at the same time visiting every known region of the earth with God's best boon to man, next to the gift of Christ and his sacred Spirit, the Holy Scriptures, "which are given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." *

The Bible Society, which is the ornament of Britain, and the glory of the nineteenth century, was established in the year 1804. Several re-

* 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

spectable ministers and laymen of the Church of England, grieved at the prevalence of ignorance, superstition, and idolatry, throughout a large portion of the world; and being anxious to frustrate the attempts which were then made by Republican France, and by infidelity in our own, and other countries, to discredit the evidence, vilify the character, and destroy the influence of Christianity; resolved on forming an institution, whose sole object should be to diffuse the knowledge of God's word, by circulating it 'without note or comment' in the different languages spoken throughout great Britain and Ireland; and also as far as its funds should admit, by printing and distributing Bibles and Testaments in foreign dialects throughout the whole world. It was denominated 'the British and Foreign Bible Society.'*

Another circumstance which led to its formation was, that at that eventful period, there existed a great destitution of the Sacred Scriptures in several populous localities of England and Wales, which nothing but such a Society could adequately relieve. The institution by its forcible appeals to the public, suddenly acquired the sanction of a considerable portion of all ranks and degrees of persons in the British nation. The success with which it has pleased Almighty God to bless its efforts, has greatly exceeded the most sanguine expectations of its founders. For in

* See its reports.

thirty-eight years, by the assistance of its numerous auxiliaries, and the formation of kindred institutions in America and Europe, the British and Foreign Bible Society has done as much, or more, to advance the glory of God than all other religious societies in Christendom have effected in a century. And should its future exertions be commensurate with the wants of the universal field which it cultivates, we doubt not but that conjointly with missions, it will prove a mighty instrument in God's hand for the conversion of the world, when "every man will hear (and read) in his own language, the wonderful works of God." The society has obtained the patronage of the hierarchy of the Church, no less than eleven Bishops affording it their encouragement and support; a considerable portion of the dignitaries and ministers of the Church of England are either subscribers annually to the parent institution's funds, or give it active pecuniary assistance in their respective districts; a great number of the aristocracy, gentry, and influential members of the state, are both patrons and presidents of its Auxiliary Societies, and attend its anniversary meetings in their own localities; whilst tradesmen, and all grades of the community, liberally aid its funds by their subscriptions and contributions.

Its income, the last year, amounted to the munificent sum of £101,322. 9s. 2d. From its commencement to the present time, it has distributed 13,223,383 copies of the word of God in different languages used by the inhabitants of the eastern

and western, the northern and southern divisions of the world. The Society has circulated, printed, or translated the Scriptures in whole or part in 136 languages or dialects,—directly, in 68 languages or dialects—indirectly, in 68 languages; making a total of 136. The number of versions, (omitting those which are printed in different characters only,) is 158; of these, 106 are translations never before printed.* There are in connection with the parent Society, 410 auxiliaries, 350 branches, 2036 associations; making a total of 2,796. In the colonies and other dependencies of Great Britain, there are 415 institutions of a similar kind. In the Hibernian Bible Society, there were in 1840, auxiliaries 68, branches 180, and 167 associations; making a total of 550, in the four provinces. These copies of the Scriptures have gone forth, as so many voices from heaven, to awake a slumbering world from "the death of sin to a life of righteousness." "Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the end of the world. There is neither speech nor language, but their voices are heard among them. Like the material sun in the firmament, which cometh forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a giant to run his course. It goeth forth from the uttermost part of the heaven, and runneth about unto the end of it again, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof." These messengers of

* See the Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society for 1841.

peace have visited every part of the globe, scattering light and illumination, knowledge and gladness, salvation and mercy, fertility, health, and happiness, in their triumphant march. They have visited the palaces of kings, as well as the meanest cottages of the poor; the mansions of the nobles, as well as the lowly huts of the needy and wretched, offering to the one permanent dignity and honour and felicity,—and to the other, "the unsearchable riches of Christ,"* to crown them with righteousness and joy for evermore. How many millions of souls have been blessed with unutterable joys by the faithful delivery of their heavenly message, eternity only can disclose; suffice it to say, they have enriched the poor with imperishable treasures, they have invested royalty itself with the most enduring titles, they have given eternal life to the spiritually dead; sight to the blind, health to the sick, salvation to the lost, real comforts to the wretched and disconsolate; and pardon and peace to rebels doomed to die.

But what are these Bibles and Testaments which have been distributed, when put in opposition to the destitution and exigencies of a "world which lieth in wickedness:"† little more in comparison with its real necessities, than as one copy of God's Word amongst seventy or eighty millions of immortal souls, "perishing for lack of heavenly knowledge."‡

Let then the resources of the Society be aug-

* Eph. iii. 8. † John v. 19. ‡ Hosea iv. 6.

mented a hundred-fold, by each individual contributing liberally according to the means with which God has blessed him, in order that his "ways may be known upon earth, his saving health among all nations." Let the wealthy and affluent give of their abundance, and those who have but little, cast "their mite into the treasury." Present then your offering to the Most High, "as a matter of bounty and not of covetousness."* To stimulate our liberality to every good work, let us remember the declaration of St. Paul, "that he who soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."† Appeal then to your consciences, and ask, have we done what we could to support this noble and useful undertaking? if it be so, Christ, the Lord of heaven, who will not suffer the smallest service rendered to him in faith and love, to go unrecompensed at the great day of retribution, will gratefully acknowledge our pious efforts, saying, in the presence of an assembled world, "You have wrought a good work upon me; ye have done what ye could; verily, I say unto you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world,

* 2 Cor. ix. 5. † Ibid. ix. 6—8.

there also that which ye have done shall be spoken of for a memorial of you."* But if a niggardly spirit should induce us to withhold our charity, and say in the murderous apathy of Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?"† have the untutored heathen any claim to my pity and attention? what then can we expect but the awful malediction of heaven,—the denunciation pronounced on the devoted city of Meroz? "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."‡

Every argument which can be used in support of any other charitable institution applies with resistless energy to this; for consider the spiritual benefits which it has been made the instrument of so widely dispensing, as also the effects which it is destined hereafter most likely to produce. The Bible "is the rod of God's power."§ And as in every age, he has been pleased to employ it for the instruction of the Jews in righteousness,—so in all probability he will, at the latter-day glory, use it for the conversion and reformation both of them and the Gentiles. And who can doubt its capacity to effectuate the arduous task? Is it not emphatically styled "the word of God, the sword of the Spirit," which can cut down and destroy all opposition made to his kingdom, whether offered by men or devils? "For the word of God is quick

* Matt. xxvi. 13. † Gen. iv. 9. ‡ Judges v. 23.
§ Psalm cx. 2.

and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*

2. Another striking feature of the increase of available piety and usefulness in the members of the Church, is the formation of a Society exclusively devoted to the conversion of the Israelitish nation. The Jews, for the violation of the national covenant by idolatry, and for their rejection and crucifixion of Christ, have long been abandoned of God, and devoted to utter destruction. Not only has the wrath of heaven been poured out upon them without measure, but they have been unjustly and cruelly spoiled in turn by every nation, who have deprived them of their civil rights and privileges, confiscated their property, sold and appropriated them as slaves, and barbarously murdered them; as if they were unworthy of existence within the pale of regulated society. Not only has God given them up to judicial blindness and obduracy, but Satan the father of lies, has put upon them the vail of ignorance,† prejudice and unbelief; so that they cannot see the excellency of Christ the Messiah, their Lord and Saviour. Add to this list of calamities—to fulfil the denunciations of prophecy against them, they have been scattered up and down the earth, they have been visited "with the sword, with famine, and pestilence, to be a curse, and an astonish-

* Heb. iv. 12. † 2 Cor. iii. 14—16.

ment, and an hissing, and a reproach among all nations, whither God has driven them."* To wind up the scene of their unparalleled sufferings, their enemies have neglected to use any means for their salvation, and have aggravated their miseries by the insulting taunt: "This is an outcast, this is Zion, whom no man seeketh after."† Well might Israel indulge in lamentation of her grief, and touchingly expostulate with those who have inflicted it, saying, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." Several pious and benevolent Christians of our Church, commiserating the afflictions and wrongs of the ancient people of God, formed a Society expressly for their relief in the year 1809, entitled 'The London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews.'— Eleven of our Bishops (and we hope ere long, the whole episcopal bench will follow the laudable example) have patronised this excellent institution, which is entirely conducted by the members of the Church of England. Several of the nobility and higher classes of the community, together with a great number of the clergy and laity of the united kingdom, have vouchsafed it their support; the former, by subscriptions and congregational collections made in its behalf; and the latter by their contributions. The income of the Society

* Jer. xxv. 9—18. † Ibid. xxx. 17.

which has steadily advanced, amounted last year to the sum of £22,938 19*s*. 2*d*. By the agency of its Auxiliaries and Branches, the Society's claims to public attention are made known throughout the whole kingdom. It has translated the Scriptures into Hebrew for the use of the Jewish nation, amongst whom they are either sold at reduced prices, or gratuitously distributed, according to circumstances. It has an Episcopal Chapel in London, where the converts are baptised and regularly instructed in the principles of Christianity. It has also a Mission House in the metropolis, which serves as an important auxiliary to the other means employed by the missionaries. It occupies stations in England, Hamburgh, Germany, Russia, Poland, Constantinople, Asia Minor, Jerusalem, and Africa. Of the 50 missionaries or agents connected with the Society, 30 are of the house of Israel. Its committee can rejoice to see abundant spiritual fruit springing up under their labours. They have received authentic information of several thousand Jews being added to the Church of Christ, a large proportion of the individuals are known to the missionaries and friends as adorning their Christian profession.*

After these omnipotent displays of divine grace, who will have the impiety to ask, can God convert 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and bring them within his heavenly fold?' He undoubtedly can and will; for he has declared his purpose, to

* See Report of the Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews.

make that despised people "an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations."* The voice of eternal truth has affirmed its future restoration and happiness, in terms sufficiently encouraging to revive the hopes of the nation. "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord; shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God. Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her; rejoice with her for joy, all ye that mourn for her. That ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees." †

It is evident from the religious excitement of the Jews, and their general expectation that the Messiah will shortly appear, to convert their nation, reinstate them in their ancient privileges, and render them once more the happiest people in the world, that Jehovah is fully at work with them. Sacred prophecy warrants the liveliest hopes of a speedy fulfilment of such expectations. Christ

* Isa. lx. 15. † Ibid. lxvi. 8—12.

has declared that a definitive period is fixed for the reign and destruction of the eastern and western antichrists, and the consequent exaltation and felicity of the Jewish nation: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled:"* "Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days."† St. Paul forcibly proves that "God hath not finally and irreversibly cast off his people"—but that even at the present time "there is a remnant according to the election of grace," which will shortly be followed by the conversion and restoration of the totality of the nation; "for I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceit; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, there shall come out of Zion (Jesus) the deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."‡

Do we desire then to see the universal erection of Christ's kingdom, and all the kings of the earth bowing to his righteous sceptre, and all nations serving him with fidelity and love;§ then we shall eagerly seize every opportunity of diffusing Christian knowledge amongst the Jews; for their return to God will be the signal for the simul-

* Luke xxi. 24. † Hosea iii. 5. ‡ Rom. xi. 2—26.
§ Psalm lxxii. 8—20.

taneous conversion and happiness of the whole world?* Two irresistible arguments may be offered for our sympathy with that afflicted people, and for our attention to their spiritual necessities. First, the unprovoked injuries and insults heaped upon them in every country and age, in which the British nation has had no small participation. Let us try, in some degree to wipe away the reproach of such conduct, by making the best reparation in our power, which will be more effectually done by giving them the sacred oracles in their own dialect, and by sending heralds of mercy amongst them, to invite them "to look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn" bitterly for him, that he may be induced to have compassion upon them, and shew them his salvation. Secondly, gratitude for spiritual blessings which they have been made the means of communicating to us Gentiles, give the Jews a paramount claim to our devoutest notice. To them were primarily committed the oracles of God, which have reached us through that medium; the prophets and apostles, with one exception, who have set forth Christ crucified for the redemption of mankind, were Jews raised up for that purpose; in fine, Jesus the Lord and Saviour of a lost world, is of Jewish extraction. So that every thing that pertaineth to our temporal and eternal happiness is derived from that long-neglected people. "If therefore, they have sown unto us spiritual things,

* Zech. xii. 10.

is it a great matter, if they should reap our carnal things?"* When, under God, they have imparted to us "the bread of everlasting life,"† shall we refuse them in their state of religious destitution, that knowledge of Christ which will turn their sorrow into joy, and make them meet, in common with us Gentiles, favoured by their means, "to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."‡

I have to offer my most cordial congratulations to the friends of Israel, on the erection of a Christian church, and the appointment of a converted Jew, as the bishop of Jerusalem, in connexion with the Church of England. This is a most auspicious event for "the lost sheep of the House of Israel:" for from the metropolis of once favoured Palestine as the centre and focus of evangelical light, shall truth again emanate, and diffuse its influence throughout the immense regions of the east. Then there will be another oriental star to direct inquiring magi to the hallowed abode of the heavenly King. God has been always angry with the persecutors of his people. But they who show pity to them, are objects of his peculiar favour. "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Zion with a great jealousy. And I am sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease; for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction."§ It therefore argues well for the piety and

* 1 Cor. ix. 11. † John vi. 27. ‡ Col. i. 12.
§ Zech. i. 14—18.

zeal of Great Britain, that she has, at this critical juncture taken the initiative in the glorious enterprise of their conversion. From this very circumstance, if there were no other to encourage us, I am led to believe with the Rev. Mr. Faber,* that "the ships of Chittim" spoken of by Daniel, as the vehicles of Israel's conveyance to the Holy Land, point directly to the great maritime resources of this country, and show that England is to be the honoured instrument, in aiding the accomplishment of those promises, which have respect to the future return of the Jews to their native land. What a happy consummation will this be to that afflicted nation! And what an exhaustless revenue of true glory will it bring to the British nation! It will cover her with a more solid, and substantial, and imperishable honour, than she ever yet acquired by her military or naval prowess, or by any other demonstration of her greatness and vast resources.

* Faber's Dissertations on the Prophecies.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

THE cursory view of the formation of those religious Societies, which have been spoken of, and the beneficial effects which they have produced both at home and abroad, and their capability, under the divine blessing, by the evident extension of their operations, of evangelizing the world, and rendering it superlatively happy, argues favourably for the vitality and increased efficiency of the Church from whom they originated. When the blood circulates copiously from the heart, and is freely diffused through the whole animal economy, what can be the natural result but health and vigorous action? And can our pious institutions which denote the spiritual life and animation which exist in the Church fail to convey life, renovation and peace to heathen nations, "sitting in darkness and the shadow of death?" We calculate, with moral certainty, according to the divine promise, that, through the Saviour's spiritual influence accompanying the exertions made by Christians, to spread the everlasting Gospel, "the wilderness and the solitary place, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; they shall

blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay shall be grass with reeds and rushes." * "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." †

Now the intrinsical value of good effected by human agency, must be estimated by its relation to this world and the next; by its reference to time and eternity. To build almshouses for the reception of the aged and the indigent, to erect hospitals for the sick, to found and endow schools for the instruction of the rising generation, are exalted acts of charity, worthy of a candidate for heaven, and bestowing a large quantity of solid benefit upon the necessitous, objects for whom they are designed; but these Christian efforts however necessary in themselves, or beneficial to others, have only the short-lived good of the body principally in view; their advantages, though great, terminate with the present fleeting state of existence; and do not extend to the world above

* Isa. xxxvi. 1—10. † Ibid. lv. 8—13.

the skies. Whereas, missions to the heathen, and to the Jews, the free circulation of the Scriptures, the publication of salvation through a crucified Redeemer, involve in themselves every species of charity both temporal and eternal. They at once have a direct aspect to the welfare of soul and body. And we learn from an infallible authority, that the latter is not to be put for a moment in competition with the former; when he says, "what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" * The interrogations so strikingly proposed by him, who died on the cross to redeem us, at the infinitely enormous cost of his precious blood, can only be answered in the negative. They show the incalculable worth of the soul and the grandeur of its destiny. They demonstrably prove that the salvation of a single immortal spirit is worth any sacrifice we can make, any expence or trouble we can incur, to effect it; and consequently that any exertion made in its behalf, is of vast more importance than we are accustomed to imagine. "Let him know," saith the Apostle James, "that he which converteth a sinner, from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins." † "I say unto you," reiterates the divine Saviour, "that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance." ‡

* Matt. xvi. 26. † James v. 20. ‡ Luke xv. 10.

To be then assistant or auxiliary in blessing the souls of mankind, is a high intellectual gratification; a heaven-born spiritual luxury, which no words can adequately describe. If "angels who excel in wisdom and power and holiness," deem it honourable to be employed on embassies of mercy to a ruined world; * oh, what an honour should we account it, (vile and despicable as we are, in comparison with them,) to be "labourers with God," to be co-operators with Christ, and the eternal Spirit, in erecting his glorious kingdom, in snatching men as brands from the everlasting burnings," † and raising them from the abyss of endless woe, to the immeasurable heights of interminable bliss. The most capacious mind is lost in the sublime contemplation,

In this work of mercy, the Church of England is actively engaged; and will continue to be, until time is swallowed up in a boundless eternity. Her venerable bishops and priests call upon the nation and the individuals composing it, to participate with them in the refined luxury of doing good. Oh, ye members of the church, cheerfully respond to the call, and as one great collective body, pour copiously your silver and gold into the treasury of God, "that his ways may be known upon earth, his saving health among all nations." Be it your concern every hour to prove that you love your Church sincerely, and wish to make her the admiration of the world, by carrying out her plans of

* 1 Cor. iii. 9. † Zech. iii. 2.

usefulness far and wide throughout the universe; in order, "that where our power," scientifically, judicially, commercially, and politically, is known, our mercy may be felt." In this way you will draw down the invocated blessings of millions upon the church and state, and partake of the beatitude of heaven.

About thirty-two years ago Dr. Claudius Buchanan, a divine of the Church of England, enriched with the grace of God, gifted with superior talents and learning, and burning with zeal for the conversion of British India, proposed to give the sum of £1000 to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, for the best essay on an ecclesiastical establishment, for that immense continent. The successful candidate was Dr. Hugh Pearson, the present Dean of Salisbury. The attention of the nation was roused by this seasonable publication, to the grave consideration of the subject, inferior to none in importance, because it involved the happiness of 150 or 160 millions of British subjects, wrapped in the thickest gloom of Pagan idolatry, ignorance, superstition, cruelty, and every vice that characterizes the heathen world. The consequence was, the erection of an episcopate at Calcutta, which has been ably and piously filled successively by Drs. Middleton, Heber, James, and Wilson. Overwhelmed by the onerous and too extensive field of duty which they had to cultivate, after labouring but a few years, with great fidelity and success, three of them soon fell victims to an exhausting climate. To effect the

evangelization of India, a college was built about forty years ago, for the instruction of native converts, with a view to qualify them for the task of enlightening their benighted countrymen. Churches have been built in suitable stations, to which chaplains and missionaries have been appointed, "who go forth in the strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteousness, and his only." Schools both for boys and girls have been attached to every settlement, and the scholars taught in these useful seminaries of Christian learning, have made such solid and rapid progress, as to bid fair for extricating not only themselves and their parents, but their neighbours also, from the iron grasp of idolatry and superstition.

The Scriptures have been translated into many dialects of the East, in which no versions of them had previously appeared; and these, as "the good seed of the kingdom," have been liberally scattered, and will soon "bring forth fruit abundantly" to the glory of the Redeemer. Useful religious treatises and tracts have been widely distributed amongst the Indians, tending to withdraw them from the absurdities of Paganism, to the "knowledge of the true God and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent." *

Within the lapse of a few years, bishoprics have been appended also to the presidencies of Madras and Bombay, extending the benefits of ecclesiastical dominion and order throughout the several states of our Eastern empire.

* John xvii. 3.

And now, to accelerate the march of Christian truth, a cathedral is building at Calcutta, in a style of magnificence calculated to impress India with a deep sense of the costly efforts, which the parent state is willing to make, to advance its spiritual welfare.

By the spiritual means and appliances of the English Church, a mighty moral revolution has been produced in the minds of all classes of people in India. Through the exertions of our missionaries and teachers, the strongholds of prejudice and ignorance have been successfully assaulted, and, in some instances, carried. Error has fled confounded and ashamed before the light of evangelical truth. Barbarous customs, which had secured the sanction of immemorial usage, have been quietly exploded.

Moreover, through the blessing of the Most High, upon the indefatigable labours of our missionaries, a deep-rooted conviction prevails throughout our East Indian empire, that Christianity is destined, at no distant period, to triumph over Mohammedanism, Hindooism, and every species of error, that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

A similar establishment was provided for the West India Islands a few years ago. Bishoprics have been founded at Jamaica and Barbadoes, to diffuse the blessings of evangelical instruction throughout the islands, subject to the sway of the British empire. Churches are built in every considerable town and parish, which are crowded

with attentive hearers, many of whom are regular communicants of the Church of England. Schools and Christian institutions are attached to every station for the religious and useful education of the negro children and population, some of whom will, we hope, be qualified to act hereafter as teachers, and catechists, and readers, to their sable countrymen. And who can tell but that these simple-hearted Christians, clad "with the whole armour of God," and with the panoply of the gospel of Christ, may be enabled from on high, to wield successfully "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," * against the malignant hosts of darkness, and to establish the kingdom of the Redeemer, "which is not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," † in that land of darkness and error, where Satan hath reigned with uncontrollable sway for thousands of years.

Australia and Malta, in the old world, Newfoundland, and New Zealand, in the new, have recently partaken of the fostering care of British Christian benevolence, by the erection of episcopates within them, calculated to dispel the spiritual ignorance of those portions of the globe, and to pour a flood of light and blessedness upon them, "to emancipate their inhabitants from the bondage of Satan, and to admit them to the glorious liberty of the children of God." ‡ Throughout these vast uncultivated wastes of the earth, "sowers are

* Eph. vi. 17. Heb. iv. 12. † Rom. xiv. 17, 18.
‡ Rom. viii. 21.

gone forth to scatter the seeds of righteousness, which, under the genial influence of heaven, will bring forth abundantly acceptable fruit to the glory of God, and to the eternal welfare of those who are made the recipients of his rich mercy and loving-kindness. New Zealand, in particular, which has been lately ceded to the British crown by its chiefs, is now become an integral part of our territorial possessions; and will, under the shadow of our protection, rapidly rise to such a scale of civil and religious importance, as will give it a pre-eminent position amongst the list of well-regulated nations.

And are we too sanguine, when we reckon upon the high probability of seeing the almost boundless empire of China, with its population of three hundred and sixty millions, "casting its idols to the moles and bats;" to become worshippers of the true God, and to receive "his son Christ Jesus from heaven, who delivereth men from the wrath to come."* Is it too much to expect that, in consequence of our recent conquests in that mighty kingdom, and the political influence which it will enable us to exercise over it, God "will loose the loins of its emperor, open before us the almost impenetrable two-leaved gates; that he will go before England in this laudable enterprise, and make the crooked places straight; that he will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron?"† We must not measure om-

* 1 Thess. i. 9, 10. † Isa. xlv. 1, 2.

nipotence itself by our puny arms. What God effected in Babylon, and elsewhere, he can easily accomplish in China. And that he will effect it, is morally certain, from the warrant of his own prophecy, which avers, that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this."*

And what an immense revenue of glory will accrue to Jehovah and his co-equal Son, what honour will redound to England and its favoured Church, in being made the effective instrument of such an exalted work! Oh, ye British Christians, send up your orisons to God in behalf of long lost China, and send forth the messengers of peace, to cry unto her, "Behold your God," and be happy.

But it is high time to leave for a few moments this enchanting scene, upon which the Christian's and the Philanthropist's eye will linger with refined delight, to contemplate the salutary operations of the Church at home. What a mighty impulse has been given to the ministers and members of the Church within the last seven years! Each desolate part of Christ's vineyard throughout the land, feels its vital influence, by being thrust into a state of higher cultivation. To supply the spiritual destitution of a widely increasing and teeming population, which no efforts of voluntaryism could overtake, hundreds of Churches and

* Isa. xi. 9.

Episcopal Chapels, are rising in the metropolis, in our cities, towns, and villages, through the munificent piety of her sons. In these, the word of life, the gospel of our salvation, will, we trust, be faithfully dispensed to myriads of accountable beings; who, before their erection, perhaps, had scarcely ever attended sacred worship, and had been growing up in reckless vice and impiety, poisoning the walks of society by their profane example, and utterly regardless, either of their salvation, or their responsibility to God. But now thousands assembling within these sacred edifices, feeling the vitality of Christian instruction, will abandon "the paths of the destroyer;"* become humanized in heart, spiritualized in their affections, honest and devout in their behaviour, and true aspirants after a blissful immortality.

It is demonstrable then by palpable matter of fact, no less than by the admission of the soundest and wisest economists, with the direct sanction of the intelligent Burke, 'that Christian knowledge is the cheapest defence of a kingdom,' against the savage incursions of profligacy and vice, and delinquency of every sort.' Erect these formidable barriers against the encroachments of sin, and you will materially reduce the sum of moral as well as physical evil. You will raise up the degradation of fallen humanity to the pinnacle of real dignity, and honour, and happiness.

Another distinguishing feature of the animation

* Psalm xvii. 4.

and zeal of churchmen, to rise to the improved and urgent demands of the times, is visible in the strenuous exertions which are making to afford religious and useful education upon a system commensurate with the necessities of a rapidly growing population. Education, fifty years ago, was comparatively scarce, and confined to the few who could pay for its lessons; but now it is widely disseminated throughout the length and breadth of our favoured country. It is like "the leaven hid in a measure of meal" till it is incorporated with the whole mass of society. Walk through the cities, and towns, and districts of the kingdom, and what do you see, but seminaries erected for the instruction of the young, "in the things which belong to their peace." Almost every village has its weekly and Sunday schools, at once its just boast and security. There the youthful mind is taught "to love God, and his neighbour as himself;" trained up to the right discharge of its duties, civil, social, domestic, and religious, and for the bright inheritance of heaven.

The great National Society in London has put forth the vast resources entrusted to it in assisting to erect schools in every town and village in the kingdom. It has about 18,000 schools in connection with itself, containing upwards of 1,000,000 scholars, receiving weekly and Sabbath instruction, in the principles of the Established Church. At the central school in Westminster, both masters and mistresses are trained in the system of the society; and thus they are qualified to carry its

plans into operation in every district of the land. If only means adequate to the object proposed be furnished by the public, the society's work will be conducted on a scale of such magnitude, as will effectuate the pious wish of our late beloved monarch, George the Third; 'that every child, as well as adult in his kingdom, should be able to read the word of God with facility and profit.'

And within the period of the last two or three years, Diocesan Schools, to improve the system of education, and to adapt it not only to the lower, but to the middling orders of society, with a view to qualify them more perfectly for the positions they are destined to occupy, have been, and are in a course of building in every city and district of the nation. In these masters and mistresses may acquire such improved knowledge of education, as will make them competent to conduct their rural schools with enlivened vigour and success.

What a vast quantity of good, religious, social, civil, and domestic, will all this machinery of education produce! So long as the instruction in our schools is based on the doctrines and precepts of the Bible, the highest good will be the result. The fear of God, a due regard to the vast concerns of an eternal state, a proper subordination to governors, a just demeanour to superiors, and courtesy to inferiors, and a disposition to be satisfied with our lot in this vale of tears, in expectation of a better in heaven; in fine, that 'honesty which is the best policy,' will signalize the spirit and deportment of every rightly instructed pupil.

But where science, and mechanics, and politics, and a frigid philosophy, exclusively usurp the important place of scripture, there pride and conceit, and self-sufficiency, will bud; rebellion against lawful authority will blossom, and bring forth its deadly fruits; and discontent will generate those factious principles, which, if generally indulged, will, in time, be sufficiently strong to subvert the very foundations of a state. Woe to a nation that shall dare to imitate the conduct, and imbibe the apostate spirit of the ancient Jews, by rejecting God, and the sound knowledge which his oracles impart, for the wretched substitute of a "worldly wisdom," falsely so called! At last, the same complaint will be uttered, and a similar punishment overtake the former, that fell with accumulated weight on the latter; God will exclaim concerning such contemners of his word and his will, "hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. Thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head: for the Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them."*

* Jer. ii. 9; xiv. 36, 37.

The Church has taken a decisive lead in the education of her sons, as well as in every measure, designed to glorify God, and advance sound scriptural knowledge. Let her inflexibly adhere to her judicious plans; improving them where they are susceptible of amelioration; that her institutions may be productive of the largest amount of good to the kingdom and the world. Let her travel on, with accelerated speed, until she overtakes the wants of her multiplying population; and with God's blessing upon her combined efforts, replenishes the earth with righteousness and peace. "Shew thy servants their work; and their children thy glory. And the glorious Majesty of the Lord our God be upon us; prosper thou the work of our hands upon us, O prosper thou our handy work."*

* Psalm xc. 16, 17.

CHAPTER VII.

FURTHER AMELIORATIONS WITH REGARD TO THE ECONOMY OF THE CHURCH, AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF ITS REVENUES—HER CAPABILITY OF INCREASED EFFICIENCY.

When necessary, safe, and constitutional reforms are commenced with a judicious zeal for attainable perfection, whether in Church or State, how forcible is the reproof conveyed to those who wish to destroy such beneficial institutions; and how strong is the encouragement held out to those, who are anxious to support and conserve them, in all their integrity and excellence, by the striking question proposed to Joshua and Zerubbabel, to animate them in the erection of the second temple of the living God, "who hath despised the day of small things." To show, that every difficulty in the way of salutary amendment shall vanish before his outstretched arm, Jehovah says, "who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain, and he shall bring forth the head stone thereof, with shoutings, crying, grace, grace unto it. The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it, and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto you. For they shall re-

oice, and see the plummet in the hand of Zerub-abel with those seven, they are the eyes of the ord which run to and fro through the whole arth." *

Small beginnings, then, both in the kingdom of nature and grace, often lead to the most astonishing esults. Adam was appointed, not only to be the ederal head, but also the natural stock from which ll mankind should derive existence. And the whole Jewish nation sprung from the loins of Abraham, he great progenitor of that once privileged people. The same remark holds good with respect to the dispensations of grace. "And Jesus said to his disciples, so is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. And he said, whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God, and with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard-seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth; but, when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches, so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it." †

1. We hail with great delight and satisfaction

* Zech. iv. 6—11. † Mark iv. 30—32.

the initiatory movements made by the Church, in the necessary work of reformation, Let her but advance in this wise career, and she will certainly strengthen the attachment of her friends, and put to silence the ignorant and unreasonable cavils of her enemies; God also will look more propitiously towards her, when she invokes his aid to "shake herself from the dust," which she has contracted: when she awakes to "put on her strength and beautiful garments," then there shall no more come unto her the uncircumcised and unclean;" but they who bear the vessels of the Lord shall be clean, "hallowed to his service, seeing eye to eye, as the watchmen of the flock, distinctly through the common medium of faith and righteousness:" then shall she be for a crown of glory to the Lord of Hosts, and for a diadem of beauty unto the residue of his people, and for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate."*

We shall see the march of internal and external amendment in those salutary acts which have passed in the last six years, relative to the more just and appropriate distribution of Church property. The act for the commutation of tithe, to be henceforth converted into an annual rent or payment, will be followed by the best of consequences to all the parties concerned; not only will the laity and clergy have their respective rights placed upon a secure basis, but every occa-

* Isa. xxviii. 5, 6.

sion of irritation and animosity between them will, we trust, be for ever removed. Whilst the one will proceed quietly to the conscientious discharge of his high spiritual functions, to bless and save the souls confided to his care; the other will be duly sensible of the inestimable benefits conveyed; and in return, cheerfully fulfil his stipulated pecuniary engagement towards the minister, whom God hath ordained to instruct him in "the things which make for his everlasting peace." Such should be the reciprocation of feelings and sentiments between a pastor and his flock; the former being always vigilant to watch over his parishioners, to strengthen the weak, to instruct the ignorant, to reclaim the wanderer, to save "the dead in trespasses and sins," to comfort the afflicted, to pour the balm of heavenly consolation into the wounded bosom, and to point all to the paradise above, for the redress of those evils which embitter the chequered walks of life: and the latter, in conformity with God's high command, "to obey them that have the rule over them, and submit themselves; for they watch for their souls as they that must give account" to Christ, the chief shepherd; "that they may do it with joy and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you. Remember them who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labour among you, and are over you in

the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves." *

2. Several of the incomes of our Bishops having been found unequal to the support of their dignified stations; and others so richly endowed as to admit of a reduction, without real detriment to their sees; an act of parliament has passed to effect a more general equalization of their revenues. Canterbury, York, London, Winchester, and Durham, have been diminished in amount, to augment the other bishoprics, with an income suited to raise them to more efficiency and vigour. A new see has been erected for Ripon including a diocese of considerable extent.

3. A new act has been enforced also for abolishing superfluous prebendaries and sinecures, and for making cathedral property available for augmenting smaller benefices; to improve the temporal comfort and resources of the parochial clergy, whose incomes in thousands of instances, are so scanty as to compel them either to press on the bounty of their more affluent relations; or to take pupils to eke out a more sufficient maintenance for their families. An ecclesiastical commission has been instituted, consisting of a certain number of spiritual and temporal Lords, to carry out the provisions of so necessary and just an enactment. From their moderation and justice, in enforcing these legislative regulations for the

* Heb. xiii. 7, 17.

general benefit of the Church and its ministers, we may reasonably augur the greatest good, in composing public irritation, and making the clergy, as a body, not only more effective for pastoral usefulness, but also more contented and happy in their stations.

4. The new act for restricting pluralities and more strictly enforcing residence, is an important step to further improvement; it will pave the way at no distant period for their gradual and total extinction. As the funds of the Church shall increase in the hands of the commissioners, by the demise of existing prebends, our poorer incumbencies will be enriched with revenues affording such a moderate, yet suitable provision for their occupants, as shall secure them from poverty and want, and enable their families to assume that position in society to which they are justly entitled.

The leading features of an act passed on the 14th of August, 1838, claims a more distinct notice. Although it admits of the holding of two benefices by a spiritual person, yet it limits the distance of occupancy to ten statute miles. Under the defunct laws of 21 Henry VIII. c. 13. and 57 George III. c. 99, the prescribed distance was thirty miles; a distance much too remote to allow of the personal jurisdiction and spiritual superintendence of the clergyman who held pluralities; but by abridging the distance, the evil of non-residence is considerably diminished, and he can exercise a more effectual supervision and controul over the respective portions of his sacred charge.

Further; 'no spiritual person having a benefice with a population of more than five hundred persons can accept, and take to hold therewith, any other benefice, having, at the time of his admission, institution, or being licenced thereto, a population of more than three thousand persons; nor shall any spiritual person hold together any two benefices, if, at the time of his admission, the two benefices jointly shall exceed the yearly value of one thousand pounds."* Before the passing of the act several livings might be held by a clergyman, which, on account of distance, could not be benefited by his pastoral labours; but by thus narrowing the sphere of action, a more easy access is provided to those who have an unquestionable claim upon his personal ministrations.

And to confine more strictly the clergy to an unremitting attention to their parochial duties; 'it is enacted, that it shall not be lawful for any spiritual person holding any cathedral preferment, benefice, curacy, or lectureship, to engage in, or carry on any trade or dealing, for gain or profit; or to deal in any goods, wares, or merchandize; unless any share in any trade or dealing shall have devolved, or shall devolve, upon any spiritual person, or upon any other person for him or his use, under, or by virture of any device, bequest, inheritance, intestacy, settlement, marriage, bankruptcy, or insolvency; but in none of the foregoing excepted cases, shall it be lawful for such spiritual

* See "The Act to abridge the holding of Benefices in plurality."

person to act as a director, or managing partner; or to carry on such trade or dealing, as aforesaid, in person; and all spiritual persons convicted of illegally trading may be suspended for such time as the judge shall deem fit, and for the third offence be deprived 'of his benefice altogether.'

The same act also provides more certainly for the constant residence of the clergy in their parsonage houses. Spiritual persons afflicted 'by any incapacity of mind or body, or by the dangerous illness of a wife or child making a part of his family, may obtain on his petition to the bishop, a licence for non-residence, for a period not exceeding six months; renewable only by the allowance of the archbishop of the province, in pursuance of a recommendation in writing from his diocesan, setting forth the circumstances and reasons which induce him to make it.'

5. The Incorporated Society for promoting the enlargement, building, and repairing of churches and chapels, is likely to be a powerful engine of usefulness, for supplying 'the means of grace and the hope of glory,' to thousands of localities, where churches have become necessary to meet the wants of an ever-growing population; millions of which, but for such seasonable aid, would have no sanctuary to resort to for divine worship, no minister to vouchsafe instruction in righteousness, no friendly hand to guide them to heaven; but living in heathen ignorance, would sink into the grave, the prey of sin and satan, to encounter the merited anger of an avenging God. The whole amount of

money expended out of the funds of this pious institution has been £324000. and it is matter of just thankfulness that from its commencement in 1818, it should have directly assisted in building 473 new churches and chapels, of enlarging or rebuilding 1570 parish churches, and of providing by these means additional sittings to the number of 563,691, of which 397,853 are free for the accommodation of the poor.

6. An act for improving the condition and extending the benefits of grammar schools, and to establish schemes for the more just application of their revenues, having due regard to the intentions of their founders, provides that in future not only Greek and Latin be taught, but such other branches of literature and science as may be necessary to qualify the youths admitted into them for superior trades and mercantile business. This alteration will render them more generally beneficial to the community at large, and allay that irritation of the public mind, which has been excited against such useful endowments.

7. The act passed in the last session of Parliament, for better enforcing church discipline by referring ecclesiastical demeanors to the summary decision of the Court of Arches, was rendered absolutely necessary by " the past mode of proceeding, in causes for the correction of clerks; which was attended with great expense and delay and uncertainty, occasioned, as well by the number of courts which had jurisdiction in such causes, as

by the multiplicity of appeals allowed by law from the decrees of such courts."

Now the removal of these cases to the Court of Arches will tend very materially to diminish the aforesaid evils, and to promote a more uniform, speedy, and effectual administration of justice. The act empowers the Court in the exercise of its judicial functions, to pass a sentence, upon the conviction of any spiritual person of a dishonest and scandalous life, or of any offence cognizable by the statute, " of excommunication, suspension *ab officio et beneficio;*" that is, of deprivation, deposition, degradation, or any spiritual censure for the reformation of his life and manners. A measure, if duly enforced, which is calculated to satisfy the nation, and to increase the piety and vigour of the Church, by the punishment of those vicious and profligate clergymen, who are a disgrace to their sacred order, and a fatal stumbling-block to those amongst whom they officiate; and whom, by their licentious example, they serve to harden and deprave.

If " one ordinary sinner destroyeth much good"* how influentially pernicious to the souls of men must the conduct of an ungodly ecclesiastic be, who, instead of guiding men to heaven, plunges them into " the broad road, that leadeth to destruction."† God denounces the heaviest judgments which he can inflict, upon such offenders against his divine majesty: " woe to the idol shepherd that

* Prov. ix. 18. † Matt. vii. 13.

leaveth the flock! the sword shall be on his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened."*

Such progressive improvements prove that the ecclesiastical commission is awaking to the right discharge of its duty; searching out every cause of offence, and seeking to remove every palpable corruption and abuse, that can contribute to deform the Church; and to adopt every method suggested by religion and sound reason, to "lengthen her cords, and strengthen her stakes,"† and to make her a more general blessing to the world and the nation.

8. And with her revenues and instruments, she is capable, when her collective strength is exerted, to assist mightily under God in subduing the nations "to the obedience of faith in Christ."‡ Let her stretch forth, as the grand depositary of light and salvation, her gigantic arm, to embrace the kingdoms "which lie in wickedness," and to impart to them the imperishable treasures of Christ. Let her missions be extended to every nook and habitation of the known world; "that from the rising of the sun, unto the going down of the same, God's name may be great amongst the Gentiles."§ Let her missionaries, fired with philanthrophy and zeal, advance to attack the strongholds of Satan, wherever he reigns with cruel sway over the consciences of men. God will, for

* Zech. xi. 17. † Isa. liv. 1—4. ‡ Rom. i. 5.
§ Mal. i. 11.

the maintenance of his own glory, and the extension of his Son's kingdom, assuredly prosper their labours, by the accomplishment of his promise; "for, as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and little hills shall break forth before you into singing, and the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." *

9. Our's is eminently a missionary church, and is qualified by her resources to conduct missions upon a scale commensurate with the exigences of the famished nations; she prays, in her liturgical forms of devotion, "that God's ways may be known on earth, his saving health amongst all nations." "Let the people praise thee, O God: yea, let all the people praise thee."† "O merciful God, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor wouldest the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted

* Isa. lv. 10—13. † Psalm lxvii. 1—7.

and live; have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word; and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold, under one shepherd, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the holy Spirit, one God, world without end."*

Prayer, however, if it be not followed with becoming efforts for the conversion of the heathen, will not be sufficient, when we possess the means, to effect the desirable object, or to evince our attachment to Christ, or our pity for their benighted state. The command of Jesus is as obligatory on us, as it was on the apostles and primitive Christians; "go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."† "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."‡ A genuine missionary spirit is, then, the surest test of our attachment to Christ. If we neglect the performance of this imperious duty, what shall we reply to Christ, at the great day of accounts, when he shall accost us, "saying, I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink. I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick

* Collect for Good Friday. † Mark xvi. 15, 16.
‡ Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." *

10. Let not the energies of the Church of England be wanting at home, where there is a wide scope of action, to evoke her zeal. There are still, even in the nineteenth century, after the establishment of our common Christianity, millions who have no adequate conceptions of their duty to God, no love for the Saviour, who died to redeem them; no becoming solicitude to obtain heaven, or avoid the damnation of hell. Over these we should weep and pray; and strive, by our unremitting efforts, to "pluck them as brands from the burning." † If they perish through our apathy and criminal neglect, they will "come to a fearful end; but their blood will be upon our heads." ‡

Let us take especial care as a nation, to make a discreet use of our patronage; and fill, as opportunities will admit, both our ancient and modern built churches, with evangelical "pastors, after God's own heart, that they may feed the people committed to their charge, with knowledge and understanding." § "He that hath my word, let

† Matt. xxv. 41, 46. † Zech iii. 2. ‡ Ezek xxxiii. 6.
§ Jer. iii. 15.

him speak it faithfully: what is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord." * Those who are best adapted to work efficiently the evangelical machinery of our excellent church, are ministers, acquainted by divine tuition with all the broad and prominent outlines of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; who know it, in its various bearings and details, in its rich provisions and consolations; and who are resolved "whether men will hear or forbear," † to preach it doctrinally, practically, and experimentally; in order that "they may save themselves and them that hear them." ‡ It is principally through the instrumentality of such right-minded men, that the Church for the last forty or fifty years, has attained such eminence for piety and usefulness. And if we sincerely desire to make her a universal Church, the favoured receptacle of all grades and parties of men, let us devoutly pray to God to plant such "ambassadors of Christ," in every city, and town, and village, of the united kingdom.

11. Another effectual mode of extending her usefulness, and permanence, and increased prosperity, is the carrying out to the full extent that system of religious education, which she has so auspiciously commenced. Let her moral and useful lessons reach every child and youth of both sexes in the nation; that instead of allowing them to grow up in ignorance and vice, the prey of radicals and levellers, and ripe for sedition and

* Jer. xxiii. 28. † Ezek. ii. 5. ‡ 1 Tim. iv. 16.

revolt; they may become polished stones of the temple of the living God; "trees of righteousness of his own right-hand planting, that he may be glorified" by their faith, obedience, and readiness to every good word and work. A people thus early trained in "the doctrine which is according to godliness,"* constitute the strongest bulwark of a nation in time of war, and its security, ornament, glory and honour, in peace.

'Train up thy children, England, in the ways
Of righteousness, and feed them with the bread
Of wholesome doctrine. Send thy swarms abroad!
Send forth thy humanizing arts,
Thy stirring enterprize,
Thy liberal policy, thy gospel light!
Illume the dark idolater,
Reclaim the savage! O thou ocean Queen,
Be these thy toils when thou hast laid
The thunderbolt aside.
He who hath blest thine arms,
Will bless thee in these holy works of peace!
Father! thy kingdom come, and as in heaven
Thy will be done on earth.'

Southey's Poetical Works, Vol. II. p. 237, 238.

A church maintaining this lofty attitude, and dispensing universally such inestimable benefits, is fixed on the rock of eternal ages, whence impregnable in the strength of her God, she may modestly bid defiance to the combined assaults of her wicked enemies, be they ever so potential, ever so violent and ever so malicious; for he will hide her under the shadow of his wings, "till their tyranny be overpast."

* 1 Timothy vi. 3.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES THAT WOULD RESULT FROM THE SUBVERSION OF THE CHURCH, IF IT WERE PRACTICABLE—THE DUTY INCUMBENT ON THE NATION TO SUPPORT HER AGAINST THE MACHINATIONS OF HER ADVERSARIES, BY ITS COMBINED EFFORTS AND PECUNIARY ASSISTANCE.

SOME men are so impatient of salutary controul, so passionately fond of novelty and innovation, that reckless of consequences, they are ever ready to attempt organic changes, and pull down institutions, which if carried into full effect, would certainly involve themselves, as well as the community, in one common ruin. Not satisfied with the correction of what is erroneous, or with repairing what can be amended, with strengthening the weak, and consolidating the several parts; so as to render the whole more productive of advantage, they are eager to demolish our beneficial systems in church and state; without being able to give us any substitute for them, but the vain, and crude, and untried theories of their own disordered minds. Led on by the demon of mischief and infidelity, they incessantly cry as the enemies of God did, with reference to Jerusalem and its temple, "down with it, down with it even to the ground."*

* Psalm cxxxvii. 7.

However such men "may sport themselves with their own deceivings, this wisdom (if it deserve the name) descendeth not from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning; but is earthly, sensual, and devilish."* It has no origin but in satanic darkness and cruelty, no aliment but in depravity, and no end but in madness and total ruin. "But these natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things which they understand not, and (without deep remorse for their crimes) they shall utterly perish in their own corruption."† Were they permitted by the righteous judgment of God, to accomplish their diabolical project, they would indeed gain a victory over truth and righteousness, which would lie prostrate at their feet; but they would obtain his unceasing wrath, and the execration of all the wise and good, as a deserved recompense. The Devil and his emissaries would exult at their success, but angels and pious men would weep day and night, on account of their folly and wickedness.

These destructionists have read Jewish and profane history to no purpose; unmindful of the tragical fate of that people, they go on continually in the indulgence of their vain-glorious dreams. But let me remind them that a rash theorizing spirit (like their own) early discovered itself in the temper of the Israelitish nation, which exposed them to the wrath of heaven, led to their ignominious captivity at Babylon, for seventy years;

* James i. 16, 17; iii. 15. † 2 Pet. ii. 12—15.

and finally to the destruction of their polity, both civil and ecclesiastical; until, "having filled up the measure of their iniquity," by their rejection and crucifixion of Christ, they are set forth as a constant admonition to the whole world. Not content with a theocracy, which is the most perfect government, both for time and eternity, God justly abandoned them to their own delusions, declaring by the mouth of his prophet, "that the children of Israel shall abide many days, (that is, till the period of their final restoration in the latter day glory, of which nearly 2000 years have already expired) without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without a teraphim; afterwards the children of Israel shall return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness, in the latter day."* Thousands in the present day, instead of being instructed by such a terrible display of just vengeance, on the one hand, and of consummate infatuation and misery on the other, are still anxious to overthrow our institutions, which bear the strong impress of God upon them; and have been preserved through successive generations, by his unerring wisdom and providence. Instead therefore of wantonly discarding institutions which have worked beneficially for ages and centuries, how much wiser would it be to hearken to God's exhortation addressed to the disobedient Jews: "thus saith the

* Hosea iii. 4, 5.

Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." *

Must we always be like children in their infantile sports; who no sooner erect the babel of their puerile imaginations, than they violently throw it down, to gratify a morbid fondness for novelty and change? Shall we never cease from folly, and learn wisdom? "Oh when shall it once be." †

Sound practical reformers actuated by the fear of God and zeal for his honour, wish rather to test and examine our institutions, in order to render them more effectual for the purposes for which they were designed. Now, provided their inquiries be rightly conducted, with a view to elicit and commend what is excellent, and apply suitable remedies to what is wrong and defective in them, we can see no valid objection to their proceedings; for their object is not the demolition of church and state, but their conservation and improvement. So long as the foundation is secure and the superstructure is safe, though there be a few chinks or loose and decaying places in the walls, and fissures in the ceilings and apartments, they are satisfied with the timely reparation of them, without absurdly razing the edifice to the ground. Should the timid objector urge, 'Whilst you attempt to amend defects, you may endanger the safety of the whole structure.' Then we may reasonably answer,

* Jer. vi. 16. † Ibid. xiii. 27.

apply props, and buttresses, and supports, rather than through a groundless dread of reformation, suffer the whole fabric to fall, and overwhelm you in its ruins. Such a salutary procedure has scripture and right reason, and the public good to sanction it. The direction of an inspired apostle is not less applicable to religious doctrines and discipline, than to civil and ecclesiastical politics: "prove all things, hold fast that which is good." *

'But the Church of England has unsound members connected with it, and other faults, for which, say her dissenting objectors, she ought to be destroyed.' We may, without any invidious feeling towards those who differ from us in minor points, which are not sufficient to justify a separation, retort the charge, and ask, may not the same objections be urged in an equal degree at least, against every class of religionists? Are there no hollow and deceitful professors, who assume the lovely garb of religion for sinister purposes? Are there no hypocrites and formalists? Are there no Pharisaic and self-righteous characters? In a word, are there "no wolves in sheep's clothing;"† no licentious, depraved, and dishonest persons, within the pale of dissent? We know what answer truth and accurate observation will return to these stringent questions.

It is, however, but just to declare, that a great number of dissenters, who differ in non essentials from the church, are decidedly pious and ortho-

* 1 Thess. v. 21. † Matt. vii. 15.

dox; zealous for the glory of God, for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom; and for "all those fruits of righteousness" which bespeak the vitality of the holy principles which govern them; men who would do honour to any Christian community to which they might belong: *utinam, nostrorum essent.*

But has the mantle of piety and love, and charity, worn by Watts, and Doddridge, and Howe, and Baxter, and some of those excellent men, to which we have alluded, generally fallen upon the body of our modern dissidents! If so, why do so many of them join with deists and infidels, and Socinians, and Papists, and radicals, and chartists and socialists, and with all the enemies of God, in striving to subvert an establishment, which he has signally honoured, and still employs, as his agent, for dispensing spiritual good to millions of our species? Is not this an unnatural and an unholy alliance? Is it not an anomaly of the nineteenth century? If the spirits of their devout progenitors could revisit the earth, would they not solemnly reprobate "this communion of light with darkness, of Christ with Belial?"* But what need is there to evoke their manes from the grave, when we have their solemnly recorded protest, in their writings against the unhallowed association of their successors, for political and democratical purposes, with the enemies of God and man? Though such perfidious policy, may, possibly for a time, subserve the secular interests

* 2 Cor. vi. 14, 17.

of a selfish party, will it promote "glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will towards men?" Will it be approved of the Lord, in that day "when he will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart?" *

We are happy to find that many Dissenters, aware of the mischievous designs of the adversaries of the Church, have kept aloof from the anti-evangelical conspiracy of their political brethren, and have denounced it, as unscriptural and profane.† But it is high time to inquire, what consequences would most probably ensue her destruction? Would the adversaries of the church have any cause to boast of their impious triumph? Assuredly not; for a fierce and perhaps a sanguinary struggle for religious supremacy would immediately follow. The different parties would say to each other, we made use of you as political auxiliaries and partisans, to accomplish the demolition of the establishment, which was the common desire of our hearts; but now our object is attained, we have no further need of you, we will be supreme, you must acknowledge our authority, and act in dutiful submission to our mandates. Thus like thieves quarrelling about the division of their ill-gotten spoils, each party, regardless of the other's claims to pre-eminence, would strive, under some political head, to assert its rights, by an appeal to

* 1 Cor. iv. 5.

† See Christian Observer, a work which has rendered essential service to the cause of Christianity.

the sword; till piety, and charity, and justice, having fled from the earth, a civil war would probably be the consequence, attended with all the tragical scenes of Cromwell's days; or if popery should gain the ascendancy, she would "make herself drunk with the blood of the saints,"* and rivet chains on our souls, "which neither we nor our forefathers could bear." Democracy with all its dire attendants would soon follow the march of religious contention, and soon terminate in anarchy and agrarian spoliation. Many of those, who were loudest in their demands for her abolition, would be overwhelmed amidst the collision and bloody strife of the combatants; a condign punishment worthy of their impious deeds. And are these such consequences of the demolition of the Church, under the spurious pretext of liberality in religion, as a truly good man can contemplate with calmness and without emotion? Will not every peaceful follower of Christ say, from such tragical scenes, "Good Lord, deliver us?"

The destruction of our national Church, if it were feasible, would be the greatest calamity which could afflict this great nation. The curse which overtook the Jews for their revolt from God, would be inflicted on our unhappy country, for its unprovoked rejection of his lawful authority. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water; but infinitely worse,

* Rev. xvii. 6.

of hearing the words of the Lord: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north, even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." * When God is thus cast off by a national act of abjuration, when his divine ordinances are abolished, and millions are deprived of the means of grace, and left to perish in unrepented sin; when the throne and the altar are wantonly trodden under foot, what but spoliation and crime can usurp their place, till the kingdom, ripe for perdition, would be accursed of God, and become a prey to contending factions. And these are scenes which a cold-blooded liberalism can meditate on with delight; confounding all ideas of right and wrong, and grasping covetously at the honestly acquired property of others, it wishes to riot in licentiousness, robbery, and injustice.

The bare possibility of a revolution, so horrific in its aspect, and deplorable in its issue, should arouse all the friends of true religion, of order, and of good government, both within, and without the pale of the Church, to use every legitimate means of averting an evil, which would, if it ever occurred, be the prolific cause of effecting.

All ranks of men from the Queen to the meanest of her subjects, should form an holy alliance, a sacred confederacy, to defeat the malevolent designs of infidelity and lawless democracy. Let there be a union of all honest hearts and hands,

* Amos viii. 11—13.

(for union is resistless strength,) to preserve the common bulwarks of church and state. Let the feeblest contribute his assistance, and the strongest his piety and talents, and energies, to avert the awful catastrophe. Let the faithful in the land present their supplications to the most High, to advocate the righteous cause of the nation, against the fierce modern Sennacherib, that longs to destroy its temples, to rase its altars, and hurl its throne to the ground. Then will Jehovah "laugh at his enemies, and have them in derision." * He will favour the oppressed, as in the days of Hezekiah his servant, by saying to the demon of wickedness, "whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the holy One of Israel. But I know thy abode, and thy going out and thy coming in, and thy rage against me. Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult is come up into my ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way which thou camest. For I will defend this city to save it for my own name's sake." † Sustained then by the omnipotent arm of God, no less than by his gracious promises; let us go forth fearlessly to the contest, against modern anti-christian error and violence. If the great cause so dear to us as Christians, and men be undertaken in dependence on the Lord of Hosts, he

* Psalm ii. 4. † 2 Kings xix. 22—29.

will prosper our holy enterprise, to the everlasting dismay and confusion of our enemies. They intend "to swallow us up quickly, they are so wrathfully displeased at us. But praised be the Lord who will not give us over for a prey unto their teeth. Our souls shall escape, even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare shall be broken, and we shall be delivered. Our help standeth in the name of the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth."* But in order to ensure God's regard for our institutions, and render him propitious to our country, so that it may maintain its pre-eminence among civilized nations, for its piety and virtue, and every excellence; let us examine ourselves, and "put away the evil of our doings."† "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people."‡ From the Queen of the realm, to her most inferior subjects, let there be a spirit of deep and sincere humiliation before God. Considering the privileges we enjoy both temporal and spiritual, though there be many righteous persons in the land, "who sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof;"§ yet there are multitudes amongst us, who give full scope to the licentiousness of their hearts. If God abandon a kingdom to ruin, it is "for the general wickedness of them that dwell therein."‖ Let each individual ask, how much may I contribute by my personal impiety, to vitiate and destroy my country? And how

* Psalm cxxiv. 1—8. † Isa. i. 16, 17. ‡ Prov. xiv. 34.
§ Ezekiel ix. 4. ‖ Psalm cvii. 34.

greatly may the depravity of the bulk of a people, offend God, and cause him to efface it from the list of nations! Had there been "only ten righteous in Sodom, the city would have been saved for their sakes;" but, because none but Lot answered to that character, he only was rescued from the universal overthrow.*

"Let us cast off the works of darkness," in which we live; whether they be gross and scandalous offences, such as drunkenness, adultery, covetousness, lying, swearing, or dishonesty; or the more specious and alluring sins of pride, hypocrisy, self-righteousness, formality, vanity, or a worldly irreligious life. Then God will be gracious to our land, and turn away, as in the case of penitent Nineveh, from his fierce anger, that we perish not." †

Personal religion in individuals, and piety in the mass of the nation, is essential to secure the approbation of heaven. Jehovah is not unconcerned, as some falsely imagine, whether his creatures are righteous or wicked. For he sitteth on the throne of glory as an attentive spectator of men's spirit and deportment; resolved to punish the bad, and reward the good. "Thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."‡ To show that he regards

* Gen. xviii. 32. † Jonah iii. 9. ‡ Isa. lvii. 15.

true and unaffected piety as the most distinguished ornament of our nature, he says to every acceptable worshipper, "know this also, that the Lord hath chosen the man that is godly to himself."* "Whoso offereth me thanks and praise, he honoureth me, and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God."† Cultivate then a habit of piety yourselves; and recommend all, within the sphere of your influence, to do the same. Suffer none, who dwell in your habitation, to dishonour God by profanity and irreligion, but call frequently upon them to join you in acts of devotion to his glorious name.

A diligent attendance on divine ordinances is highly pleasing to the Lord, and is the bounden duty of all who are anxious to deprecate his wrath, and propitiate his favour. He has instituted the sabbath, not only for our religious improvement, but as a test of our regard to himself. "For thus saith the Lord unto them that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even unto them will I give in my house, and within my walls a place and a name, better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off." ‡

A regular observance of the Lord's day is one of the best criterions of a religious state. When we statedly worship God on his sacred day, we evince our desire to obtain "his blessing and life

* Psalm iv. 3. † Ibid. l. 23. ‡ Isa. lxvi. 3—8.

for evermore."* But when we can spend the Sabbath in business, recreation, visiting, luxury, and vanity, we give lamentable proof of a hardened and unrenewed heart. Like the infidels of whom Job complains, such persons "say unto God, depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?"† Have we any wish then to make God propitious to our beloved country? Then, let us reverence his sacred day, agreeably to his command; and see that all who belong to us, do the same. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."‡

Sincere heartfelt prayer, whether offered by a prince or a peasant, "for God is no respecter of persons," is all prevalent with heaven to stay its avenging hand, and to procure benedictions for our country. Hezekiah supplicated the majesty of heaven to defeat the aggressive invasion of his kingdom, and he was answered by the signal de-

* Psalm cxxxiii. 3. † Job xxi. 14—16.

‡ Isa. lviii. 13, 14.

struction of Sennacherib and his army.* The pious king of Israel brought the relief of Jehovah to his assistance, when his rebellious son Absolom sought to deprive him of his throne, by crying, "O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness."† Elijah, that eminent reformer of the Old Testament Church, prayed to God to "turn the hearts of the apostate Israelites back to himself,"‡ and also to bestow (after a wasting famine of three years and a half,) the fertilizing shower, and languished nature revived, and teemed with plenty and abundance.§ Hence the truth of the apostolical assertion, "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."‖ "Behold, even now, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear." "But your iniquities have separated betwixt you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."¶ Let each head of a family throughout the land erect "an altar of prayer in their own houses, and call, like Abraham, upon the everlasting God, who heareth and answereth prayer." And who can tell but the interesting spectacle of a whole nation of suppliants, may move the compassion of heaven, draw down its mercy and its aid upon our own souls, and deliver us from the godless machinations of an insulting foe.**

Let us from the high places of authority, shew

* Isa. xxxvii. 1—38. † 2 Sam. xv. 31. ‡ 1 Kings xviii. 37.
§ Ibid. xviii. 44, 45. ‖ James v. 16. ¶ Isa. lix. 1, 2.
** Jonah iii. 5—10.

an honest solicitude to purify both the church and state from those scandals and abuses which have crept into them by the connivance and negligence of some, and by the cupidity and sordid avarice of others, who, to gratify a paltry ambition, have converted God's "house of prayer into a den of thieves." * Woe be to the nation, or the individual, who, through a love of sin, or guilty indolence, or pride and obstinacy, incurs the malediction of the king of glory, by pertinaciously cleaving to evil. Shall he not reprove their hypocrisy by a merited expostulation, saying unto the ungodly, "why dost thou preach my laws, and takest my covenant into thy mouth; whereas thou hatest to be reformed, and hast cast my words behind thee." † Will he not say to such, as he did to the incorrigible Jews, "this people turneth not to him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts." ‡ "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you." §

Finally, let us show a hallowed zeal for God, and the preservation of the church which his own right hand hath planted among us. Let our pecuniary sacrifices, to promote her glory and prosperity, give full evidence of the estimation in which we hold the best church, (with all her defects) in Christendom; a state which is the just admiration and envy of the universe. "Freely we have received," whatever we possess,

* Luke xix. 46. † Psalm l. 16, 17. ‡ Isa. ix. 13.
§ Psalm l. 22.

from God, whether of a spiritual or a temporal kind, "freely let us give," in testimony of our gratitude.

When this personal and national reform shall be effected; when each in his private, and all in their public capacities, shall "fear God and work righteousness," then Jehovah, delighted with the work of his hands, will admiringly exclaim, "this people have I formed for my praise; they shall shew forth my glory."* Independent of holding out an example highly beneficial in itself, and worthy of the imitation of all nations, we shall propitiate the aid of Omnipotence in our defence, we shall be terrible against our political adversaries, "as an army with banners;"† we shall be secure in the favour of our God; whilst 'the objections, with which infidels cavil at the truth of our religion, will only resemble the foaming waves dashing against the deep-rooted rock, which has for ages defied their unavailing fury.'‡

* Isa. xliii. 21. † Sol. Song vi. 4.

‡ See the Author's Fifth Lecture, p. 59.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NECESSITY OF FURTHER REFORM—THE ADVANTAGES WHICH WILL FLOW FROM IT—ITS POLICY—THE MEANS OF ACCOMPLISHING IT.

THE best human institutions are imperfect. As the source from which they emanate is fallible, it should not surprise us, if they partake, both in their constitution and elements and action, of the same character of fallibility and weakness. We must not look for perfection of wisdom and ingenuity to contrive the wisest method for attaining a valuable object; nor for strength and resolution to carry it into effect, from fallen and finite beings. The prerogative of perfection and skill in designing the best plans for securing desirable good to a nation or to the world, and for executing them with vigour and effect, belong only to the Lord, "whose understanding is infinite;" and who possesses not only the knowledge which is requisite to construct the machine, but how to direct it to the most beneficial use of which it is capable.

It should not astonish us then, if through the frailty and ignorance of the wisest created intelligences, errors should creep into the best concerted systems of men which they had not sufficient sagacity to foresee, nor the wisdom to prevent. Time

is the corruptor of all terrestrial things, which have in themselves, a natural tendency to deterioration and decay. When therefore they become totally incompetent from whatever cause, to answer the end for which they were formed, they should be remodled; or partially ineffective through glaring abuses and impediments, they should be repaired, and rendered more suitable to effectuate the general good of those who have an unquestionable right to look well to their salutary working.

The Church of England, though admirable in her structure and constitution, and beneficial to a great extent in her operations, needs, even in the judgment of her most tried friends (setting aside the cavils of her most inveterate foes) a judicious, temperate, and extensive reform, to adapt her more perfectly to the exigencies of the age in which we live. They are not true and staunch friends of the Church, who, blinded by a superstitious reverence extol her as an absolutely perfect institution, without flaw or defect. 'Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis tempus eget.' Her most cordial admirers, though they fix their eyes intently on her paramount excellences and pray *esto perpetua*, are not insensible of her imperfections, and sigh for their removal. It must be confessed that in the working of her powerful machinery serious obstacles intervene. Persons incompetent to the task are often appointed to direct and regulate its movements; and it is no marvel if derangement of its parts are the neces-

sary consequence. Hence abuses and malversations have surreptitiously crept in, which must be put down; excrescences and tumours have attached themselves to her otherwise robust frame, which loudly demand the knife of excision, to invigorate her health and develop her full strength. Must then the gangrene of corruption be allowed to increase its ravages, until the whole system is reduced to a state of putrefaction? Forbid it, just heaven, in compassion to our country! Forbid it, England's illustrious Queen and nobility! Forbid it, the Church's hierarchy, pastors, and people!

Our excellent reformers, Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, although they did much in modelling the Church of England upon a scriptural basis, and purifying her from the defilements of Romanism, laboured under some disadvantages, from which the present circumstances of the nation exempt us. Having just emerged from the dark cave of Popish error, they had not only the Protestant bulk of the people to instruct in the way of righteousness, but to conciliate the prejudices of the Catholics, by striving to draw them into the bosom of the newly-constituted church; consequently they left some evils which they could not easily remedy, to the wisdom of a future legislature and hierarchy to correct. In the work, therefore, of generally purifying her from abuses which have grown up through the lapse of succeeding ages, and perfecting her in all her parts, we have no such difficulties to contend with. The proper authorities have only to see and be convinced of the expediency of

a sound and substantial reform, and they possess a plenitude of power to accomplish it.

'The reformation, it is allowed on all hands, has never been completed in this country. The untimely death of King Edward the Sixth interrupted the holy work in its progress; and events familiar to every reader of English history have in various ways impeded its completion.'* The task then fairly devolves on us, to finish what they so auspiciously begun. The voice of God and the convictions of the nation, imperiously demand it. 'And whenever an idea prevails in the public mind that an important change is at hand, it usually arises from a general impression of its necessity. Recent events have also rendered it almost superfluous to add, that when such a conviction has taken place, public opinion possesses in these enlightened days, from the diffusion of knowledge, and the facility of intercourse, a power to communicate and combine, by which it is able not only to express itself comprehensively, but to render its expression effectual. It is unhappily too much the infirmity of all exclusive orders of men, that, when necessary reforms have an unpleasant reference to their own condition and advantage, they are reluctant to undertake the task; whilst they readily admit the principle of it as applicable to others, they are apt to assume a false ground, or entertain a fallacious hope of exception against its applicability to themselves. It is thus that

* Lord Henley's Pamphlet on Reform, p. 18.

men of no inconsiderable talents in other respects for the business of life, by blindly exempting themselves from a rule of conduct, which they acknowledge to be prudentand indispensable for others, have too often resisted the pressure of public opinion, until escape from being crushed by it, is impossible. When their own feelings are identified with it, and amalgamate them with the public league against abuses, by which they are themselves affected, they can perceive clearly enough, not only its justice, but its efficacy; but no sooner is it at variance with their own particular interests, than they forget at once, the submission which is due to it, and the consequences of contesting it. They forget that when called upon to defer to public opinion nothing less is required of them than to accommodate themselves to its wants; and that invariably, when provoked to hostility by unreasonable pertinacity, it not only punishes, but often vanquishes the delinquent. The struggle having once taken an active shape, higher considerations are involved than those which first led to it. It afterwards becomes a struggle for existence, between public opinion and the isolated body which opposes it: and the general sense of their moral rebellion, is ultimately satisfied with nothing short of their corporate confiscation.

The lights of history, and reason, and experience, teach us 'to eschew that dangerous obstinacy against reform, which all exclusive orders are too prone to indulge; and which must end with us,

in producing, as it has done with other bodies, a final crisis, which we may not, in the issue, have strength either to oppose or escape.'

The Jews foolishly priding themselves on their ecclesiastical and national privileges, incessantly cried in despite of the warnings of their prophets, and the impending judgments of the Most High; "the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these."* This misplaced confidence did not however preserve their polity in Church and State for a single hour, beyond the period which God had fixed for their total subversion.

Not only was their temple, the boast and ornament of their nation, literally erased by the Roman armies, but they were shorn of civil power and consequence; and became "the bye-word and reproach" of their heathen adversaries; until they tauntingly exclaimed, "this is an outcast; this is Zion, whom no man seeketh after." †

The untimely fate of the seven Asiatic churches, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, are replete with instruction to every church and kingdom in Christendom. It pourtrays in vivid colours the peril of reckless presumption, and neglect of seasonable reformation. They had been planted by the hands of the Apostles, were eminently endowed with gifts and graces from above; but when these talents were not suitably improved, they gradually

* Jer. vii. 4. † Ibid. xxx. 17.

fell from their lofty eminence, connived at the introduction of various pestilential errors; lost in great measure their first faith and love and zeal for Christ and his religion; became lukewarm, covetous, and secular, in their spirit; till Christ commissioned his beloved apostle, St. John, to reprove their errors, and to threaten them with utter extinction, unless they retraced their steps to the heavenly fold, from which they had causelessly departed? "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place except thou repent."* Heedless to the friendly rebukes of the Saviour, and "hating to reform themselves," they were given up to judicial blindness and obduracy, to seal their own condemnation and ruin. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."†

The order of Jesuits, the disciples of Loyola in more recent times, have shared a similar fate. Wherever they have gained an undue ascendancy over mens consciences in religion and politics, they have not only intrigued against the peace and happiness of society; but have used it also to

* Rev. ii. 4, 5.

† 1 Cor. x. 11, 12.

alienate the people from their lawful sovereigns, sow the seeds of discord in families, and rend them asunder, in order to subserve a vicious and carnal policy; until potentates, aware of their malignant designs, have decreed their expulsion.

The advantages, both present and future, of immediate reform, when demanded by the overbearing pressure of necessity, are too striking to be easily overlooked. God, as may be seen, in various instances in which he has called a people and a church to repentance, has been pleased to testify his signal approbation of their prompt obedience, and averted his righteous indignation from them. We have several instances on record, in both the Old and New Testaments, to prove the efficacy of genuine reformation to conciliate God's favour, and to insure the safety and prosperity of individuals, families, and nations. I shall adduce a few of the most prominent for our imitation and encouragement.

Rachel, observing the frauds practised by Laban towards her venerable husband, the patriarch Jacob, dishonestly took away her father's images, and concealed them in the tent amongst the furniture. God was highly displeased with this dishonourable act, and notified his disapprobation of it to Jacob; as well as his neglect to fulfil the vow which he made at Bethel, to dedicate the tenth part of his substance to the Lord; in gratitude for his deliverance from the vengeance of his enraged brother Esau.* "And God said unto Ja-

* Gen. xxviii. 20—22.

cob, arise, and go up to Bethel, and dwell there, and make there an altar unto God that appeared unto thee, when thou fleddest from the face of thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods, which some of his household probably worshipped, through his timid and indolent connivance, and all their ear-rings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem."* The Lord was so pleased with this compliance with his command, that he shortly after appeared to him in some remarkably visible manner, to confirm his special favour and protection to him, by the renewal of that gracious promise, which he had previously made to the devout patriarch. "And God said unto him, thy name is Jacob: thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name; and he called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply: a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee: and kings shall come out of thy loins. And the land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee. And God went up from him, in the place, where he talked with him." † To show how indispensably necessary the removal of every abuse, and the rectification of every error is, whether

* Gen. xxxv. 1—5. † Ibid. xxxv. 9, 13.

civil or ecclesiastical, God enjoined the Jews once a year to search every corner of their houses, that they might cast out all the leaven, before they made the unleavened bread for the Passover, * on pain of being "cut off, not only from communion with Israel, and the privilege of congregating with the faithful in divine ordinances; but judicially also by some open or secret punishment, from life itself."†

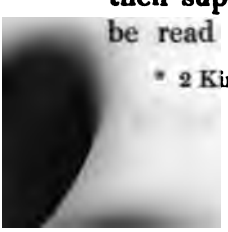
The whole nation of Israel was involved in guilt, and brought the heavy curse of God upon it, by the solitary offence of Achan. He turned his back upon the people, and suffered them to be defeated at Ai, with the loss of thirty-six men, to show his jealousy and abhorrence of sin, and to vindicate his insulted honour. Upon the complaint of Joshua, the Lord said unto him, get thee up: wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have transgressed my covenant, which I commanded them; for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also; and they have even put it among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before them, because they were accursed; neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. The offender, upon the confession of his crime, was stoned to death, with all his family; and the stolen property was consumed by fire in the valley of Achor.‡

* Exod. xiii. 7. † Ibid. xii. 15. ‡ Josh. vii.

When Josiah, King of Judah, learnt from "the book of the law found in the temple," * that God was angry with the Jewish nation for their idolatry and profanation of sacred things, "he humbled himself" before the majesty of heaven, caused the people to put away all the abominations they had committed, and induced them to make a fresh covenant with God, to serve him all the days of their life. Though the bulk of the nation acted hypocritically in the solemn transaction, Josiah, by this salutary reform, propitiated God, and escaped the wrath, which fell upon them with accumulated weight. †

Hezekiah began his reign by a decided act of ecclesiastical reformation. The national religion had been shamefully corrupted by the idolatry of the people, and he restored it to its ancient purity; instituted the Passover, sanctified the priests and Levites, hallowed the house of God, and enjoined all the people to dedicate themselves to his service. By this seasonable revival of true godliness, and the removal of palpable abuses from the Church, he obtained the blessing of the Lord, not only for himself, but upon the whole kingdom which he governed. ‡

Nehemiah, the Governor of Israel, filled with zeal for the honour of God, was grieved to behold the corruptions which had grown up in Church and State; and speedily exercised his authority for their suppression. He caused the divine law to be read to the people, which required them to



* 2 Kings xxii. 8. † Ibid. xxiii. 1—37.

‡ Ibid. xviii. 1—7.

separate from the ungodly multitude, with which they had mingled; he ordered the chamber of the house of God to be cleansed, reformed the sacred offices of the priests, forbad the violation of the Sabbath and intermarriages with strange and idolatrous nations.* God favourably accepted this mark of real devotion in his servant, and poured his benediction on himself, and on the nation at large.

Finally, Jesus Christ, the Lord of life and glory, came to be the great moral regenerator of the universe, and by his holy doctrine, life, manners, and influential example, he has shown us how much he estimates sound, legitimate, and necessary reforms, whether in Church or State. Announcing the important object of his mission from heaven to earth, he avows, "I am come a light into the world; that whosoever believeth in me should not abide in darkness, but have the light of life."† In pursuance of this design, he commenced the work of reform both civilly and ecclesiastically. He abolished the typical rites and ceremonies of the Levitical dispensation, and substituted his own all-efficacious sacrifice, instead of the mactalion of the piacular victims offered to God to propitiate his mercy under the Law.

At his august entry into Jerusalem, he asserted his right as King of Zion to effect a reformation as memorable as it was instructive to all Christendom. When he beheld, with pious indignation,

* Neh. xiii. 4—23. † John viii. 12.

novation, or from carnal and secular motives, is to fight against Christ, the Head of the Church, and to bring destruction on ourselves.

The policy of sound reformation cannot be called in question. It will render the Church itself more secure and effective. As we have already observed, the best institutions need reparation, through the lapse of time. Which then is the soundest wisdom, to suffer the whole building to go to decay, through criminal neglect; or by timely reparation, to strengthen and preserve it? Is it wise to sit quietly in the house, when the foundation is shaken, the walls are decaying, the superstructure is loosened, the rain pouring upon us in torrents, through the fissures and crevices, and the wind roaring tempestuously over us, and menacing inevitable ruin?

There is a violent clamour of the public voice for amendment from without, and a growing conviction within the bosom of the Church, that it is expedient that she should be reformed. And is it safe to stifle this expressive cry of our enemies and friends? or is it not more just and reasonable to satisfy all their consistent demands, rather than by a sullen obstinacy to provoke the aggressive hostility of the one party, or the apathetic indifference of the other, which may ultimately lead to her debasement and subversion. Ought Lord North's admonition, delivered before the spiritual and temporal peers, to be forgotten, or superciliously disregarded? 'If you do not, my Lords, reform the Church from within, it will be done

with a violent and overwhelming hand from without.

A judicious reform then will conciliate the strongest friends of the Church, and augment their veneration of her beauty and intrinsic excellence; and it will operate with talismanic efficacy, to disarm the resentment of her foes, by cutting off all just reasons of reproach. And is it not wisdom in a national church, which ought to maintain a position of universality, and be the dispenser of the bread of life to every man, woman, and child, in the kingdom, to qualify herself for the due performance of the godlike task!

The Church renovated and invigorated by a wise correction of her faults, would put forth all her native strength and energy, in successfully combatting doctrinal heresies, and establishing "every man in the truth as it is in Jesus, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that she might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."* Instead of presenting the sad and fearful spectacle of a Church "divided against itself;"† it would unite the hearts of all her sons in the high enterprise of defending the faith against the empty cavils of heresiarchs, and diffusing the inestimable blessings of sound unaffected piety, throughout the world, and throughout the land. Then the lovely scene which filled "the sweet singer of Israel" with delight in contemplating the unity of the ancient Church, would be realized in our

* Colos. i. 28, 29. † Luke xi. 17.

own. "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together. Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good." *

The means which may be made instrumental in accomplishing the arduous work of removing abuses, rendered more complicated and difficult by the growth and connivance of ages, are ready to her Majesty's and the Church's hands. 'It is exclusively a theological and ecclesiastical duty in which no layman can, or should desire to take a part in the execution of it. The experience we have gained by the conferences held at Hampton Court and the Savoy, forbids us to anticipate any auspicious results from this mode of proceeding.' 'Such assemblies,' says the judicious historian, Rapin, 'are seldom attended with a happy success: first, because the two parties must be equally animated with the spirit of peace and charity, which he shows to be rarely the case. Again,

* Psalm cxxii. 1—9.

one of the parties is usually superior, and in possession of power, and therefore not very ready to quit that advantage: and, lastly, it often happens that slight concessions are made by the prevailing to the opposite party, only to have it said that peace was offered, but rejected.'

A commission, like the one of 1689, which empowered ten Bishops and twenty divines, to meet for the purpose, and prepare alterations in the Liturgy and the Canons, seems a better and more judicious course. In that commission we find names whose memory posterity greatly reveres: Compton, Lloyd, Burnet, among the Bishops: Stillingfleet, Tillotson, Sharpe, Beveridge, Patrick, Kidder, Tennison, among the others. 'They were a set of men,' says Archbishop Wake, 'than which this Church was never at any one time blessed with either wiser or better since it was in existence: and a design that I am persuaded would have been for the interest and peace of our Church and State, had it been accomplished.' Its labours, however, must unhappily have never been adopted, but the record of its proceedings is now extant in the Archi-episcopal Library at Lambeth, and is still available for the benefit of the Church and nation. Bishop Burnet observes of them, 'the corrections which had been agreed to in it would make the whole frame of our Liturgy still more perfect, as well as more unexceptionable; and will, I hope, at some time or other, be better ertained than they were then. I am persuaded they are such as would bring in much the

greater part of the Dissenters to the communion of the Church, and are in themselves desirable, though there were not a Dissenter in the nation.'*

An ecclesiastical national synod, consisting of the Archbishops and Bishops; the Deans and Archdeacons, one Proctor for each Chapter, and the principal part of the beneficed clergy, seems to suggest the most feasible and advantageous method of accomplishing the work of reformation. 'Such a meeting or assemblage of ecclesiastical persons might be expected to draw together the united talents of the Church, now, as it regards its own defence, lying waste; to revive its energies, now apparently paralyzed, to call out its hidden resources from its mines of intellectual wealth and power, now wholly unwrought. The penetrating voice rising from this sacred order, would not only direct attention to the true character of approaching dangers, but through the blessing of God, might raise up a bulwark of defence, against which its enemies should not prevail. Sure I am that something ought to be done, and that without any further delay, for the security of that venerable body, which beyond all fair controversy needs reformation,—but whose destruction is now unblushingly sought for by many, and various, and powerful foes. A religious synod thus constituted would receive the cordial sanction of our august Queen, her ministers, and the whole nation, which anxiously desires to see such a thorough and un-

* Archbishop Wake.

compromising amendment, as would be fraught with every blessing to the parties concerned. There seems every reason for supposing that the good which it would effect primarily for itself, and secondarily for the general advancement of the cause of truth and righteousness would infinitely outbalance the momentary inconveniences which might possibly arise from it. 'The power of the Church of England, were it concentrated and put in motion, is immense. We do not of course, speak merely of the power of the clergy, but also of the laity, who are truly attached to her. These form the larger part of the same body—a body, taken collectively, of vast property, high attainments, and commanding influence; but for the present, as it regards the deeply important concerns of the Church, without a head, without motion, and without life.'

CHAPTER X.

THE EXTENT TO WHICH REFORMS SHOULD BE CARRIED IN THE CHURCH, BOTH AS TO SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL MATTERS.

When a man comes in breathless haste to acquaint me that I must instantly quit my house, because he fancies it to be in so ruinated a state, that it is liable every moment to fall and bury me in its ruins; what should I do? Must I yield, without due examination into the grounds of the supposed danger apprehended by my informant, and fly for safety under the impulse of what may prove to be an imaginary alarm; or should I not, before I make a precipitate retreat, use all the prudential means which cool reason dictates to ascertain the actual state of my habitation, and the amount of that peril which I run by occupying it? Recovering from the fright and tremor in which I have been thrown, I take my keys and ascend to the attics, and examine attentively the roof of the house, and find nothing there to disturb my confidence, but a slight aperture in one part, and a trifling breach in another made by the decay of some small pieces of wood, and the falling of mortar; I then unlock the several apartments, and examine the ceilings and walls, and find them

tolerably secure; next I descend to the cellars, and narrowly inspect the foundation,—and being satisfied that all is secure, I sit down contentedly, and ask, why these groundless fears of the alarmist, and what need of any further anxiety for my security, as the carpenter and mason can shortly repair its trivial defects, and restore its pristine strength and beauty?

Another alarmist reports that my machine is broken, and become utterly useless for any efficient purpose, and must be destroyed. Must I give implicit credit to the rumour without walking to the spot where it is fixed, and deliberately examining the extent of the injury it has sustained? I inspect the engine, and find that its motion is temporally stopped by the breaking of one of its constituent parts, or loss of a wedge, or breaking of a pinion, but that all the rest is in good order and condition. My fears are allayed, and instead of breaking up the valuable machine, and selling it to the first bidder for a fraction of its real worth, I have it immediately repaired, and its usual efficiency is restored.

These natural images fairly exemplify and illustrate the malevolent animus and designs of our liberal and levelling destructionists, in their rancorous hostility to our establishment; no less than the judicious and benevolent objects of conservative Reformers, which are fully supported by Scripture, and have the sanction of sound reason and experience to justify them. The diabolical scope of the one party, in their savage rage for con-

founding right and wrong, is the entire demolition of the Church, in order to erect the licentious Babel of their sickly imaginations, which is to last for a few days, till the breath of popular caprice and violence, should throw it down; the devoted zeal of the other, is only a wise attempt to beautify and adorn the temple of God, and adapt it to more extended usefulness. Let the machine be rigidly examined and cleansed, and worked efficiently by able hands, and it cannot fail to create for itself the silent respect of those, who are striving to shiver it to atoms, and the deep-felt admiration of the wise and good throughout the world.

'It is well,' says the learned and pious Dr. Chalmers, 'that the venerable Fathers of our Protestant Church, making distinction between the things which differ, felt and judged otherwise from the headlong innovators of the present day. They meditated the quality of the thing that was inculcated; but they let alone the apparatus of circulation. In their achievement, we behold the wisdom and principle of genuine reform. The other achievement is by men of a far different spirit, done, it may be, in the name of reform, but marking the very crisis, and having in it all the characters of a revolution; whether it be the act of a legislature, which lends itself, either to the cupidity of the nobles, or to the outcries of the multitude, or an act of pillage by the multitude themselves, broken loose from the ancient holds of authority, and borne waywardly and un-

controlably along on the surges, and amid the uproar of wild insurrectionary violence. And here may we pause on the instructive contrast between the ecclesiastical reformers of past and present days. It is on the high walk of theology and sentiment that we meet the former,—it having been their object, not to destroy the established church, but to animate it with another spirit. The struggle then related to the quality of that nourishment which should be given to the souls of the people; and the noble result was, that it should be the pure water and bread of life, taken at once from the repositories and fountain-head of inspiration, and not adulterated, as before, by the mixture of a corrupt and superstitious popery. The struggle now relates, not to the kind and quality of this spiritual nourishment, but rather to the kind of apparatus that should be maintained for the distribution of it. We cannot but remark the total difference both in character and aim, between the two reformations. If the one were a doctrinal, the other perhaps may be termed a mechanical—or, as the sure effects were not to mend, but to demolish altogether the framework of the establishment, it may be best styled a machine-breaking reformation, and of course its advocates, or rather its instigators and its agents, are the machine-breaking reformers of the present day,—far more mischievous in their higher walk, but hardly more intelligent, we do think, be they in or out of Parliament, than the machine-breakers of Kent, the frame-breakers of Leicestershire, or the incendiaries of a few years

back, in the southern and midland counties of England. It was by strength of principle or strength of argument, that the venerable Fathers of nearly three centuries back, achieved their reformation,—it will be by strength of hand, or a sort of sledge hammer energy that the coarse utilitarians of the present generation, in a period of frenzied delusion on the part of the multitude, or by a wayward exercise of power, unintelligent and unknowing on the part of the legislature, will ever be able to accomplish their's. If it be the consecrated title of reformation which is to avail them in this day of conflict, if, by its means, as with the magical influence of a watchword, they are to enlist in their favour the passions and prejudices of men,—then never was there more exemplified the omnipotence of words or sounds over the human understanding—never did conjurors in any walk, whether of politics or of fortune-telling, operate with such success on the credulity of the world, or practice a grosser delusion in the use and by the prostitution of a venerable name.

The desirable Church reform, then, whether for England or Scotland, is not certainly to destroy the machine—not even to mutilate or abridge, but rather as we shall afterwards state, to repair, and strengthen, and extend it. There may besides, be other external or even economical changes that should be honoured with the name of improvements; but mainly the great reform is, that which leaving the frame-work of the Establishment untouched, would infuse into it another spirit, or

make it the vehicle of a more powerful and scriptural ministration than heretofore. In short, the thing wanted is an internal reform; and for carrying this into effect, we do not require a change in the theology of either of the churches, none at all in their creeds, a very little perhaps in their service books—though at all times, for the efficiency of any Church, even of the best and purest theology on earth, we are dependent, and that most essentially and vitally, on the conscientious, and disinterested, and well-principled exercise of its patronage. It is not enough that we have a good machinery—we must have good men for the working of it.'*

The subject of Church-reform, is in fact divided into two distinct and separate heads. The first branch of this all-important question, embraces such reformations, as relate to evils in the confessionals, the ritual, and the discipline of the Church. The second comprises the regular and more just distribution of the temporalities and the patronage of the Church, and the due provision for the faithful performance of the duties for which those temporalities are secured. This latter species of reform is matter of civil regulation, and may not only without impropriety be treated by the laity, but is expressly within their peculiar and appropriate province.† It is not then the doctrines or theology of the Church generally, which call for cor-

* Lectures on the establishment and extension of National Churches, by Thomas Chalmers, D.D. L.L.D. p. 10—13.

† Lord Henley's Letter to King William IV.

rection; for they are so scriptural and excellent in the main, that they will bear examination with the religious creeds or sentiments of any Church in Christendom. Even in the judgment of orthodox Dissenters, the formularies of our faith challenge esteem and respect.

The requisite amendment to be made are in some expressions of her offices, which are abused by some and misunderstood by others. These are now to be examined with scrupulous fidelity. I begin with the Liturgical services of the Church, which require a sober and careful revision and correction to suit them more perfectly in some respects, to the spiritual taste and understanding of multitudes of her devoted friends both clerical and laical; and to obviate the reasonable exceptions made against them by many who differ from her; some principally, and others exclusively, on that very account. Is it not impolitic and unwise to disregard the right feelings of the former, or to dismiss cavalierly the reasonable prejudices of the latter, who might in many instances be induced by these proper concessions and alterations, to join in our national worship, and avow themselves her staunch supporters and friends? At least some of the most illustrious champions and ornaments of the Church of England have thought it our bounden duty to make the experiment, from a full persuasion of the benefit which would inevitably result from it.*

* Archbishop Wake, Bishop Burnet, and many others eminent for piety and sound wisdom. chap. ix.

'The alterations here proposed, are, it is submitted, neither violent nor uncalled for, nor contrary to the spirit of those institutions which they profess to affect. They will no otherwise change our ancient and venerable establishment,'* than to use the apt illustration of the judicious Hooker, 'a path is changed by altering only the uppermost face thereof, which, be it laid with gravel, or set with grass, or paved with stones, remaineth still the same path.' If we first take due caution 'that against scripture nothing be admitted into the Church,' it is our next duty to provide, 'lest that part which ought to be kept even, do come to be overgrown with brambles and thorns.'†

'The length and tedium of the Church's morning service particularly, and the wearisome repetitions in it, constituted a serious ground of objection to it by the millenary petitioners, in the time of James the First; an objection which is still frequently urged by persons of all classes, who are nevertheless zealous friends of the Church, and warm admirers of her generally scriptural Liturgy. On this subject Mr. Rennell reminds us that the Morning Prayer of our Church 'is made up of three distinct services, which were originally intended to be performed at three distinct times; the union of which has caused the repetition of which some men complain.' Since the three separate services are now seldom performed at different times, Mr. Rennell's

* Lord Henley on Reform, p. 60.

† Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, b. iii, s. 3.

remark seems to suggest that it might be very desirable that an abridged service for Sunday morning should be constructed out of the three. The present service, followed as it is by a sermon, and in cities and towns by the administration of the Lord's supper, is certainly too long, both morally and physically. It is a tedious obstacle to the maintaining of a proper degree of attention and devotional feeling. It is too long in a physical point of view; inasmuch as persons advanced in years, as well as the young, and those who are afflicted with any bodily infirmity or malady, cannot wade through it, without feeling more or less of an exhaustion of strength and spirits.'*

Not to insist longer on the lassitude which it must always produce in the congregation, the enervating effects of a too-lengthened service upon the officiating minister, who may happen to have a delicate and emaciated, and not a robust constitution, yea a pulmonary affection, which ill qualifies him for the performance of two duties, coupled with sermons on each occasion, must often be distressing. I have no doubt many young clergymen who would have been "burning and shining lights" in their generation, have prematurely sacrificed their valuable lives in the discharge of services, which they had not competent strength to perform. On the score of humanity, as well as expediency, the morning-service ought to be curtailed; and this may be easily accomplished with-

* Archdeacon Beren's Reform.

out impairing its vigour, or lessening its devout effects upon the audience.

Each of the three services, as formerly used, in the morning and in the evening, and at the celebration of the Sacrament, is complete in itself, comprising confession of sin, prayer, and supplication, profession and adoration, praise, and thanksgiving. A service for Sunday morning might be formed from the three, retaining all that assists devotion, all that abases the sinner, and exalts the Saviour, all that promotes the honour of God, who is the proper object of our worship, all that contributes to the edification of the people, omitting only what is superfluous, and what savours of needless repetition, which is censured by our Lord as somewhat approaching to the vain tautologies practised among heathens.*

The Lord's prayer, though inimitably excellent as a model of devotion, should not be used as it frequently is, nine or ten times on a Sunday. "The repetition of a profession of faith—the recital, for instance, both of the Apostle's and of the Nicene Creeds—in what is practically one public service, cannot be deemed necessary."†

The great body of the clergy and their congregations would hail the abridged arrangement of a morning-service by the proper authorities, and the important measure would lead to every good and desirable result. I would humbly suggest the following, if a better arrangement cannot be made, both

* Matt. vi. 7. † Archdeacon Berens' Reform, c. vii. 138, 139.

for the morning and evening services, constructed from the three, as before specified; and for the sake of method, I shall enumerate the petitions and parts of which they might consist.

THE ORDER FOR MORNING PRAYER THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, EXCEPT ON THOSE SUNDAYS WHEN THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER IS ADMINISTERED.

1. Sentences of Scripture to be read.
2. The exhortation to the acknowledgment of our offences, and to the cultivation of a suitable reverence in the presence of Almighty God. "Dearly beloved brethren," &c.
3. General Confession by the whole congregation.
4. The Absolution or remission of sins.
5. The Lord's Prayer and the petitions following it.
6. "O come, let us sing to the Lord," &c.
7. The Psalms.
8. The First Lesson and Te Deum Laudamus.
9. The Second Lesson, and Jubilate Deo.
10. The Apostles' Creed and Prayers following: (except when the Athanasian Creed is appointed to be read.)
    Omit the Lord's Prayer.
11. The Litany, (except on Sacrament days, when it may be used in the Evening Service.)
12. The First Collect for the day.
13. Second Collect for Peace.
14. Third Collect for Grace.
15. Singing, where any.
16. Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for the day.
17. Prayer for the Queen's most excellent Majesty.
18. Prayer for the Royal Family.
19. Prayer for the Clergy and people.
20. Prayer for a particular occasion.
21. Prayer for the High Court of Parliament.
22. Prayer for all conditions of men.
23. General Thanksgiving.
24. Prayer of St. Chrysostom.
25. The benedictory Prayer, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c.

Here endeth the order of Morning Prayer throughout the year.

THE ORDER FOR EVENING PRAYER THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

1. Sentences.
2. The exhortation to the congregation.
3. The Confession.
4. The Absolution.
5. The Lord's Prayer.
6. The Psalms for the day.
7. The First Lesson, and Magnificat, or Cantate Domine.
8. The Second Lesson, and Nunc Dimittis, or Deus Misereatur.
9. The Apostle's Creed, &c. omitting the Lord's Prayer.
10. The Ten Commandments, and then, "O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us." &c.
11. First Collect for the day.
12. Second Collect.
13. Third Collect.
14. Singing to the glory of God.
15. A Prayer for the Queen's Majesty.
16. A Prayer for the Royal Family.
17. A Prayer for the Clergy and the People.
18. A Prayer for the High Court of Parliament.
19. A Prayer for all conditions of men.
20. A general Thanksgiving.
21. A Prayer of St. Chrysostom.
22. The Benedictory Prayer, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c.

Here endeth the order of Evening Prayer throughout the year.

PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS UPON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

For Rain. For fair weather. In the time of dearth and famine. Or this—In time of war and tumult. In the time of any common plague or sickness. In the Ember Weeks. Or this—A Prayer that may be said after any of the former.

GENERAL THANKSGIVINGS.

For Rain. For fair weather. For plenty. For peace and deliverance from our enemies. The restoring public peace at home. For deliverance from the Plague, or any other common sickness, &c.

THE ORDER OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER, OR HOLY COMMUNION.

Rubrical Directions. Exhortation to the Sacrament, "Dearly beloved," &c.

1. Our Father.
2. Collect—Almighty God.
3. Ten Commandments.
4. Let us pray, Almighty God, or the other.
5. Collect, Epistle, and Gospel.
6. Nicene Creed.
7. Offertory, with collection of Alms.
8. Prayer for the Church Militant.
9. Dearly beloved in the Lord, ye that mind, &c.
10. Ye that do truly, &c.
11. General Confession.
12. Absolution.
13. "Come unto me all ye that travail." "It is very meet and right," &c.
14. Proper Prefaces appointed for particular times and festivals.
15. We do not presume, &c.
16. Prayer of consecration.
17. The body. The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.
    Omit—Our Father which art in heaven.
18. O Lord and Heavenly Father. Or this, "Almighty," &c.
19. Glory to God on high, &c.
20. Come Holy Ghost; or, "My God and is thy table spread," &c. or any other appropriate Hymn may be sung by the Communicants.
21. Collect, "Assist us," or "O Almighty Lord, or Almighty God."
22. The Benedictory Prayer. "The peace of God." &c.

The author of the proposed measure has not the consummate vanity to suppose, that it is absolutely perfect and free from defects. It has however one excellence to recommend it for adoption; whilst it does not impair, or in the slightest degree (as far as he can judge) affect the vitality of the morning service; it will reduce the time for the performance of it, by nearly, if not entirely, the space of half an hour. The order of service here

suggested, will occupy about three quarters of an hour in reading; a time long enough for sustaining the devout attention of the healthiest worshipper engaged in it, and sufficiently onerous for those clergymen and lay persons whose physical powers, through infirmity of constitution, will be adequately taxed by an exercise which they ardently love.

The arrangement has another advantage to justify it. It brings each service orderly and in conspectû before the clergy and laity, without the inconvenience and confusion, as at present, of turning occasionally to many parts of the prayer-book, in order to select petitions seriatim for congregational use. Thus devotion, if we mistake not, will be considerable animated, languor and debility in some respects obviated, and the convenience of all classes of worshippers, especially the laborious poor, will be consulted, without sacrificing one iota of that spiritual nourishment, which imparts a salutary vigour to their immortal souls.

Let not the obscurity of the writer hastily ensure the rejection of his plan, without consideration, as crude, unwarrantable, and impracticable; but instructed even by an heathen poet, let us commend what is good in any system, and only repudiate what is evil and erroneous:

> 'Si quid novisti rectiùs istis candidus imperti;
> Si non, his utere mecum.' *

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* Horace's Epist. Lib. i. p. 6.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHURCH SERVICES.

THE FORM OF ABSOLUTION—THE APOSTLES' CREED—THE CREED OF ST. ATHANASIUS—VERBAL ALTERATIONS PROPOSED.

I PROCEED to a careful revision and examination of the different services of the Church of England, with considerable diffidence and hesitation; not from any doubt respecting the utility and practicability of the measure which I recommend, but from a sense of the ungracious task which I have "advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God" undertaken, "with a single eye" I trust to his glory, and the welfare of that church and nation, to which I have the happiness to belong. It is with unfeigned solemnity and reverence, that I suggest any alteration, however trifling, in our scriptural, beautiful, and incomparable liturgy,—a liturgy that approves itself to my unbiassed judgment, and is the object of my sincere admiration and attachment. When I call to mind the great benefit I have always derived from its use in public and private worship, I truly coincide with the sentiments and feelings of the eloquent defenders of our authorized liturgy, when deprived of its advantages; one of them * exclaims, 'I called to

* Bishop Taylor.

mind the pleasures of the temple, the order of her services, the beauty of her buildings, the sweetness of her songs, the decency of her ministrations.' I can heartily concur with the panegyric of Comber, and say of our liturgy, that it 'is so judiciously contrived, that the wisest may exercise at once their knowledge and devotion; and yet so plain, that the most ignorant may pray with understanding; so full, that nothing is omitted which is fit to be asked in public; and so particular, that it compriseth most things which we would ask in private; and yet so short, as not to tire any one that hath true devotion; its doctrine is pure and primitive, its ceremonies so few and innocent, that most of the Christian world agree in them.'

Yet this deserved eulogy on the Liturgy, taken as a whole, is perfectly consistent with exceptions against some few of its parts; which we are not less warranted to object to, than we are bound to appreciate its vast numerical excellences. Truth and righteousness are the grand objects of every good man's researches; and error and defect, wheresoever they are found, should be unsparingly exhibited, and justly censured, with a view to their speedy correction.

I advance to the fulfilment of my arduous and ungrateful task, with chastised awe, yet not without a rational hope, that the changes proposed will appear, on candid consideration, so reasonable and expedient, to the proper authorities of the church, and to the kingdom at large, as to plead irresistibly for their adoption, at no distant period.

Some expressions in the absolvatory service of the Church have been the subject of grave dispute among Churchmen and Dissenters. It has been contended on the one hand, that the words in the absolution, that "God, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live, pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and believe his holy Gospel," are merely declarative of the condition or terms, whereupon God is willing to pardon sinners; and on the other, that they are an actual conveyance of pardon, at the very instant of pronouncing it, to all who come within the terms proposed. With just deference to the judgment of both of the conflicting parties, I think neither exclusively right nor wrong, in their difference of opinion. Whilst I think the disputed words declaratory, I conceive them clearly to admit of an absolutely effective sense, applicable entirely to, and to none others, but those who come within the prescribed conditions. I apprehend the royal proclamation of the prophet in the name of the King of heaven, is inclusive of both of the above senses; "seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." * In this gracious assurance, I imagine, I can discern, both a declar-

* Isaiah lv. 7.

shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him."* "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished; that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hands double for all her sins."†

When, therefore, the minister, by virtue of this commission, declares and pronounces such remission of sins regularly in the congregation, those amongst the assembled throng, "who truly repent and unfeignedly believe God's holy Gospel," (although he does not know who, or how many they are that do so, for God only can scrutinize the heart,) have yet their pardon sealed and conveyed to them at that time, by the Lord, through the ministration of his humble representative; since it is the ordinary method of God in dealing with his Church, to communicate his spiritual blessings through the medium of his ministering servants. The absolution then is positively and emphatically a forgiveness of sins to those who receive it gratuitously from God, by repentance and faith in the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."‡

When Jesus healed the paralytic man, he said unto him, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." But

* Isa. iii. 10, 11. † Ibid. xl. 1, 2. ‡ Luke xxiv. 47.

there were certain of the Scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, who said, in ignorance of his divinity and power, why doth this man speak blasphemies. To vindicate his claim to bestow mercy on the penitent, he confirmed the sentence which he had pronounced before all his enemies, on the sick of the palsy, for the removal of his bodily disease, and the consolation of his liberated soul.* One would think, then, that the important question angrily proposed by the Jews, nearly two thousand years ago, "who can forgive sins, but God only,"† had received such a definitive answer, as would confound the impious arrogance of those who usurp the prerogative of heaven, and satisfy the fastidious and groundless cavils of those who suppose that, when we pronounce the absolution, we imagine we can apply the benefit of it to whom we please, or that we even know upon whom, or how many, it shall, agreeably to God's purpose, take effect. Let the blasphemous usurpation of an attribute, which belongeth only to the Most High, be relegated and confined to the Pope, the Church of Rome, and its infallible guides, with whom it originated; but surely we can safely exercise a power which Jehovah has given us for the comfort of his saints; a power which is freely exerted by our accusers without the pale of the establishment, when they think the importance of the occasion demands it.

I may, perhaps, be a little too sanguine in supposing, that this needless and unprofitable logom-

* Matt. ix. 2. † Matt. ix. 1—9.

achy, about the words of the absolution, may be lessened in some instances, and removed in others, by a more distinct and expressive heading of the form itself; such as an "absolution or remission of sins" to be pronounced on "all them that truly repent and believe God's holy Gospel." This would not only show more clearly the restriction of the blessing to the contrite, but cut off the unfounded objections of those, who are too ready to seek for occasions of cavil and debate.

The Apostles' creed, commonly so called, was derived in substance from the very days in which they lived, as is evident from the testimonies of the most ancient writers. The reason which has been assigned for its formation is as follows; though the scriptures are a perfect revelation of God's will to mankind, and contain all divine truths necessary to salvation; yet the cardinal articles of our faith are so dispersed there, that it was thought necessary to collect out of those sacred writings, one plain and short summary of fundamental doctrines, which might be easily understood and remembered by all Christians.

The primitive believers used the creed privately in their families, and publicly recited it in their assemblies at stated seasons. From whence it came to pass that the constant repeating of the creed in the Church was not introduced till five hundred years after Christ.* It is to be repeated in a standing posture, to signify our resolution to stand up stoutly in the defence of it. And in Po-

* Wheatley on the Creed, Sect. 14, p. 146, 149.

land and Lithuania, the nobles used formerly to draw their swords, in token, that if need were, they would defend and seal the truth of it with their blood.* The expression catholic Church, in the creed, though justifiable in itself, is apt to create a wrong impression on vulgar minds, as if it were derived from, and identified with Roman Catholicism. For the sake of proving that we have no peculiar sympathy with that idolatrous Church, by the use of a term ambiguous in its meaning and liable to misconstruction, by the unlettered part of our congregations; to remove the puerile exceptions of some Dissenters who oppose it on that very account, it would, I think, be better to substitute for it either of the words, general or universal, which are significantly illustrative of its import, without exciting any improper feelings.

It has been a matter of dispute whether the creed bearing his name was really composed by St. Athanasius or not. Nor is this of much consequence; for whoever was the author of it, he was evidently an orthodox Christian, solicitous for the promotion of God's honour, by framing a formulary of faith based on the eternal verities of his word. Suffice it to say 'that it has been received as a treasure of inestimable price both by the Greek and Latin Churches, for almost a thousand years.† As to the subject matter of it, it (rightly) condemns all ancient and modern heresies, and is

* Durell's View, &c. Sect. I.

† Wheatley on the Common Prayer.

the sum of all orthodox divinity. And therefore if any scruple (through an erroneous judgment or imperfect knowledge of the oracles of God) at the denying of salvation to such as do not *believe* these articles; let them remember, that such persons as hold any of those fundamental heresies (at which the creed is leveled) are condemned in scripture.* "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ; he is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." † But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall also be false teachers among you, "who shall privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." ‡ That Socinians, and Arians, and Sabellians, and Deists, and Infidels, and Sceptics, and Latitudinarians, men of any, or no creed, should fiercely oppose articles of faith, that directly militate against their destructive tenets, I can easily un-

* Wheatley on the Common Prayer.

† 2 John ii. 22, 23. v. 10, 20. ‡ 2 Peter ii. 1.

derstand; for the scriptures condemnatory of such sentiments must be equally repulsive to such men with the Athanasian creed, which embodies them. And are these everlasting verities, involving as they do, the endless felicity or misery of those who believe and reject them, to be withheld in order to gratify the morbid and fatal pride of the Socinian, or the corrupt reveries of the whole tribe of Rationalists and Infidels? Whoever is ready to incur the malediction which arises from such a suppression of truth, from fear, or carnal policy, I trust that neither the Anglican Church, (of which I am proud to be a member) nor myself in my ministerial capacity, will ever be backward either in public or private, either in our written compositions or in the delivery of our sermons, to reiterate as occasion shall require, the solemn denunciations of Christ and his apostle against all the contemners of his word and gospel. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maran-atha."* "But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; (on his deep repentance) but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven."†

It is not my intention to enter into an elaborate defence of the Athanasian Creed, which I most firmly believe to be fully consonant to the word of God; this has been satisfactorily done by several

* 1 Cor. xvi. 22. † Mark xii. 33, 32.

archbishops, bishops, and clergymen, to shew, that not only the clauses objected to in it are synonimous with the words of our Saviour, "he that believeth not shall be damned;"* but also, that they are strictly "defensible from the whole tenor of Scripture, and that they ought to be regarded as a kind and charitable warning against the danger of taking up erroneous opinions upon the important doctrines, which constitute the principal subject of the creed. And now I must unequivocally declare, that the wishes of no man, however exalted in character and rank, "the wishes of no congregation, however numerous and enlightened, can in the slightest degree justify a clergyman in the wilful omission of this creed, on those days on which the rubric directs it to be used.'† And further, should any of those young men in our universities, who are preparing to take holy orders, or any of those ministers who officiate in our churches, feel subscription to the Creed and the Articles to be a burden on their consciences, which they cannot bear; then in common justice and honesty, they are bound to retire from a service, in which they must dissemble with God, do violence to the soberest dictates of conscience, and disqualify themselves for the due performance of a sacred office, which is designed "to save not only themselves, but also those committed to their charge."‡ The Articles (as well as the Athanasian

* Mark xvi. 16.

† Archdeacon Berens on the Church Service, c. 7. p. 129.

‡ 1 Tim. iv. 16.

Creed) says the late Dr. Prettyman, Bishop of Lincoln, are to be subscribed in their plain obvious sense, and assent is to be given to them simply and unequivocally. If the candidate for holy orders thinks that he sees reason to dissent from any of the doctrines asserted in them, no hope of emolument or honour, no dread of consequences or disappointment, should induce him to express his solemn assent to propositions, which, in fact, he does not believe. And let it be ever remembered, that in a business of this serious and important nature, no species whatever of evasion, subterfuge, or reserve is to be allowed, or can be practised, without imminent danger of incurring the wrath of God.*

With this strong impression in favour of the creed, I am anxious to make the slight alteration of a word, which occurs no less than four times in it; I mean the word 'Catholic,' which certainly does frequently strike the unlearned part of our congregations with the idea, that the creed itself is either of Popish origin, or that the epithet excepted against has its extraction from that quarter. The better informed members of the Church are in no danger of mistaking the genuine signification of the term; but this indulgence might be wisely accorded to those, who being too often led away by the '*vox et preterea nihil*,' have neither opportunity or leisure to consult dictionaries, if they had access to them, to correct their mis-

* Elements of Theology, Vol. ii. p. 567.

conceptions on the subject. The substitution of the word 'Christian,' instead of Catholic faith, three times used in the creed, and the Christian instead of the Catholic faith, once occurring, would compromise no principle, and at the same satisfy the scruples of a large body of persons, whom, like St. Paul, we should be desirous in non-essentials, "to please for their good to edification."* In an age, like the present, when there is a disposition causelessly to secede from our excellent Church, we should be peculiarly on our guard against giving unnecessary offence to the minds of the common people, lest we should weaken their attachment to that Liturgy, which they have been taught in their infancy to venerate, and induce them to cast off all regard for the public worship of Almighty God.†

* Rom. xv. 2, 3. The same improvement is necessary in the "Prayer for all conditions of men."

† The precise term, used in the Nicene Creed, "universal church," proposed as an amendment, is used in the prayer "for the whole state of Christ's Church militant here on earth:" what valid objection then can be made to its adoption, wherever the phrase Catholic Church occurs.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CHURCH SERVICES.

ALTERATIONS SUGGESTED—"MOST RELIGIOUS AND GRACIOUS KING"—PROPER LESSONS—THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER, AND THE PROPER RECEPTION THEREOF.

THE omission of the words, "most religious and gracious king," in the prayer offered to God for the parliament, is a concession that may be safely made on general grounds, without the most remote idea of any personal reference. The objection to this mode of expression may be given in the words of a pious layman, who, upwards of fifty years ago, gave to the public a very useful commentary on the Liturgy. 'There is one expression in this prayer which has been objected to; and I truly think not without reason. It is the application of the words, "most religious and gracious," to the ruling prince: titles which belong to no man, but in a limited and restrained sense, and can in no sense be properly given to a wicked man, be his station ever so exalted. To obey and pray for a bad prince is certainly our duty; but to flatter him, and much more to ascribe such titles of praise to him in our addresses to the throne of grace, is surely very unwarrantable.' * To mark

* Waldo's Commentary on the Liturgy, 1772.

the sense of the impropriety, to say the least of it, in using this adulatory language, it is said, that our late pious, beloved, and venerable monarch, George the Third, erased the expression "most religious and gracious king," from the prayer-book, which he used in his private devotions, and inserted in lieu of it, "a miserable sinner." This fully proves in what light the king regarded the obnoxious phrase, as containing words and ideas unsuitable to the posture and spirit of a fallen creature, however dignified, in the presence of that omnipotent God, "by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice." *

The clergy and men of education in general, use these and similar expressions as mere words of courtesy and respect, in the same manner as the terms 'most excellent,' 'most noble,' and 'most worthy,' are used by the evangelists, and the Apostle Paul in the New Testament; or in the same manner as Daniel addressed the Median monarch with the words, "O king, live for ever." Or else they regard them as applying to the office and dignity of king, and not to the particular individual invested with it. The plain uneducated men however, who constitute the bulk of our congregations, especially in rural districts, are not accustomed to this conventional use of language. They take words to mean what they literally express; and are apt to look upon the expression, to which we have alluded, as a species of flattery,

* Prov. viii. 15.

or of servility, which ought not to be used in an address to the God of truth, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. I feel assured that it has long been highly injurious both to the Church and to its ministers, who have been upbraided for using expressions, which they cannot sanction or approve. As humility, whether in a subject or a king, is one of the leading graces of our holy religion, a king really pious may naturally be anxious to get rid of an expression, not at all consistent with that most excellent quality. It was the intention of the commissioners for reviewing the Liturgy in 1689, to omit in the prayers this and similar expressions, and to substitute for them only the words, 'our king, our sovereign.' *

Canute, the Saxon monarch, is represented by some historians as one of the first characters in those barbarous ages in which he lived. The piety of the latter part of his life, and the resolute valour of the former, were topics which filled the mouths of his courtiers with flattery and praise. They even affected to think his power uncontrolable, and that all things would be obedient to his command. Canute, sensible of their adulation, is said to have taken the following method to reprove them. He ordered his chair to be set on the sea-shore, while the tide was coming in, and commanded the sea to retire. 'Thou art under my dominion,' cried he; 'the land upon which I sit is mine; I charge thee therefore to approach no

* Archdeacon Berens, c. 7, p. 131, 132.

further, nor dare to wet the feet of thy sovereign.' He feigned to sit some time in expectation of submission, till the waves began to surround him: then, turning to his courtiers, he observed, that the titles of Lord and Master belonged only to him, whom both earth and seas were ready to obey.*

Some very judicious churchmen, and able theologians, who have written in defence of the establishment generally, have strongly urged the necessity of some alterations in the proper lessons for Sundays; and these would not only be a material improvement in the service of the Church, but remove that disgust which certain chapters of the Bible, when read aloud in the congregation, are calculated to create in the breasts of ignorant and profane people.

There can be no question but that any and every part of sacred writ is well adapted to convey spiritual instruction to all ranks and conditions of men; yet it is not intended as the slightest disparagement of the inspired volume to say, that some portions of it are better suited than others, to minister general instruction, and promote the edification of a Christian congregation. Some allowance should be made also for the refinement and taste of the age, with reference to some passages, which it is painful to hear read, to modern ears. It is readily conceded that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable

* Hume's History of England.

for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works;" * yet it is much to be questioned, whether the reading of some chapters of the Old and New Testament to a promiscuous assembly, consisting of persons of both sexes, of different ages and education, is the wisest course that can be adopted. It would be easy to descend to particulars, and to shew that a more judicious selection of lessons might be made for congregational purposes. Mr. Rennels says in his letter to Mr. Brougham—'For the sake of two or three verses, a chapter, otherwise of little interest, is often selected. The framers of the selection did not anticipate the time, when the Church would be attended only on Sundays, otherwise perhaps they would have selected chapters of a more striking character, and of a more general interest.'

The pious and judicious divines who took the lead among the commissioners in 1689 for reforming the Liturgy, contemplated an amended selection of lessons for Sundays: and it were devoutly to be wished that their intentions should now be carried into full effect by those authorities who are empowered to make such improvements, as would tend to the edification of the Church, and stop the mouths of cavilling gainsayers.

The sentiments and language contained in the Church office for administering the holy commu-

* 2 Tim. iii. 15—17.

nion is so decidedly evangelical, devout, and solemn, as to be admirably qualified not only to manifest its spiritual nature and design, but to portray in the most lively and intelligent manner (of which the subject is capable) the blessings derived to the faithful communicant therefrom. It is I conceive impossible to engage heartily in that service, without feeling a compunctious sense of our personal guilt and deserts, the infinite demerit of sin which required such a costly sacrifice, as is there exhibited, to atone for it, the necessity of faith in Christ's blood to wash away our native pollution, and reconcile us to an offended God, and to secure to us 'the remission of sins, and all other benefits of his passion.'* Whatever heavenly blessings we now enjoy, or hope hereafter to receive from Almighty God, they are all purchased for us by the death, and must be obtained through the intercession of the holy Jesus. We are therefore commanded in scripture not only to mention his name continually in our prayers, but are also taught by visible signs, such as the two sacraments afford, to represent and set forth to his divine Father his all-sufficient and meritorious death and sacrifice, as a more powerful way of interceding and obtaining God's acceptance. So that what we more compendiously express in that general conclusion of our prayers, (through Jesus Christ our Lord) we more fully and forcibly represent in the celebration of the holy Eucharist,

* The author's Lecture, Passim 79, Vol. II.

wherein we intercede on earth, in conjunction with the great intercession of our High Priest in heaven, and plead the virtue and merits of the same sacrifice here, which he is continually urging for us there.*

The Church of England in her Homily on the Sacrament declares 'that three things are requisite in him who would seemly, as becometh such high mysteries, resort to the Lord's table. First, a right and worthy estimation and understanding of the mystery itself. Secondly, to come in faith. And, thirdly, to have newness or pureness of life, to succeed the receiving of the same.'†

Before all things, it is a matter of high importance to take special care that we form just ideas of the Lord's supper, and administer it agreeably to the command of our blessed Saviour, as his holy apostles did, and the Fathers of the primitive Church. For (as that worthy man St. Ambrose saith) he is unworthy of the Lord, who celebrates that sacred mystery otherwise than it was delivered by him. We must then take heed, lest of a commemorative sign and figurative representation, we make it a real sacrifice, as the papists presumptuously do; lest of a real communion with believers in Christ, we convert it as some of the Corinthians did, into a private festival, lest of two parts, the bread and wine, we administer but one, like the Romish priests, who unwarrantably refuse the cup to the laity; lest, applying it as a

* Wheatley's Common Prayer on the Communion.

† Homily, p. 376.

mass for the benefit of departed souls, like the idolatrous Catholic Church, living Christians should be deprived of the blessings thereof. Ignorance of the spiritual nature of the sacrament, has converted it into an idolatrous rite, into an useless charm to impose on the credulous and simple-minded.*

Wherefore in order to a suitable reception of the Lord's supper, let us (agreeably to St. Paul's direction) "examine ourselves previously, and so eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."† To the real participator, it is the seal and actual conveyance of all the blessings of redemption.‡ "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (spiritually) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" §

Next we must possess a sure and constant faith not only that the death of Christ strikingly exhibited in the sacrament, ‖ is available for the redemption of the world generally, and all true believers particularly, ¶ for the remission of sins, and reconciliation with God the Father; but also that he made upon the cross a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for our atonement and salvation, in which we really become interested, the moment we "believe through grace," in his name.** Let

* Homily, p. 376, 377. † 1 Cor. xi. 28—31.
‡ Hooker's Ecc. Polity, Book the Fifth, passim. § 1 Cor. x. 16.
‖ Gal. iii. 1. ¶ 1 Tim. iv. 10. ** Acts xviii. 27.

us seek a spiritual union with Christ by faith, and then we shall savingly know the meaning of that figurative, but all-important truth so solemnly declared by himself; "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." *

The last thing necessary in him who would be a profitable recipient of the Lord's supper is newness of life and godliness of conversation; for a regenerate life is required of all real communicants as appropriate fruits of their faith, and as genuine evidences of their being in a state of salvation. To these the Saviour appeals as tokens of their sincerity and love to him.† "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." ‡ Further, 'as in the act of participating the sacred elements, we declare not only our communion with Christ, but also that affectionate unity which we should cultivate with his spiritual members; so are we expected to banish from our hearts, all dissension, vain-glory, pride,

* John vi. 50—58. † Ibid. xiv. 15. ‡ 2 Pet. i. 5—10.

ambition, strife, envying, contempt, hatred, and malice, and by the exercise of every Christian temper, be so joined by the bond of love in one mystical body, as the corns of that sacramental bread are united in one loaf.'

It is evident from Scripture,* and the earliest records of the primitive Church,† that this ordinance was administered to the professed disciples of Christ in general, on every Lord's-day at least. And I have no doubt, as the Church of England shall advance in true holiness and zeal and christian simplicity, that the same devout practice will obtain in all our sanctuaries. 'The frequent recollection of that grand event, which is the central point of our holy religion, was exceedingly suited to increase humility, hatred, and dread of sin, watchfulness, contempt of the world, faith, hope, love, gratitude, patience, compassion, meekness, fortitude, and all other holy dispositions.' Indeed, this institution was expressly designed "to show forth the Lord's death till he come,"‡ and this proves to a demonstration that the doctrine of atonement is the most essential part of Christianity; and an habitual dependence on a crucified Saviour, the grand peculiarity of the Christian character. And now, I must call the attention of the reader to two points in the Rubric, containing directions for the right administration of the Lord's Supper: the first orders that "as many as intend to be partakers of the holy com-

* Acts, passim. † Cave's Primitive Christianity.

‡ 1 Cor. xi. 26.

munion shall signify their names to the curate at least some time the day before." The intention of this Rubric is to enable the officiating minister to judge of the fitness or unfitness of the candidates, who offer themselves to the communion; in order to prevent any improper persons from presenting themselves with the congregation of the faithful, to partake of the sacred rite. It would be very desirable that this regulation should be generally and strictly enforced by the clergy, that they might feel assured of the spirit, and piety, and conduct of those who wish to join with them in receiving the significant emblems of the Saviour's dying love. Without this salutary precaution, kindly and judiciously exercised, it will be impossible to guard against the daring intrusion, so loudly condemned in the parable of Christ, of the man "not having on the wedding-garment."*

The second and third Rubrics enjoin, that if any of those be an open or notorious evil liver, or hath done any wrong to his neighbour by word or deed, so that the congregation be thereby offended; the curate having knowledge thereof shall call him and advertise him, that in anywise he presume not to come to the Lord's table, until he hath openly declared himself to have truly repented, and amended his former naughty life, that the congregation may thereby be satisfied, which before was offended; and that he hath recompensed the parties to whom he hath done wrong, or at least de-

* Matt. xxii. 11—14.

clare himself to be in full purpose so to do, as soon as he conveniently may.

The same order shall the curate use with those between whom he perceiveth malice and hatred to reign; not suffering them to be partakers of the Lord's table, until he know them to be reconciled, &c. And that this is no novel or unnecessary power, is plain from the ancient church, in which though all open offenders, as soon as known, were put under censure, yet, if before censure they offered themselves to the communion, they were repelled. This is evident from St. Chrysostom, who does not more earnestly press the duty, than he does plainly assert the authority of the sacerdotal power to effect it. "Let no Judas, saith he, no lover of money be present at this table; he that is not Christ's disciple, let him depart from it. Let no inhuman, no cruel person, no uncompassionate man, or unchaste, come hither. I speak this to you that administer, as well as to those who partake, for it is necessary. I speak these things to you, that you may take great care, and use your utmost diligence to distribute these offerings aright. For no small punishment hangeth over your heads, if knowing any man to be wicked, you suffer him to be partaker of this table; for his blood shall be required at your hands. Wherefore, if he be a general, or a provincial governor, or the emperor himself, that cometh unworthily, forbid him, and keep him off; thy power is greater than his. If any such get to the table, reject him without fear. If thou darest not remove him, tell

it me; I will not suffer it, I will yield my life rather than the Lord's body to any unworthy person; and suffer my own blood to be shed, before I will grant that sacred blood to any but to him who is worthy."*

But here again, it has been objected, "that all persons, before they are admitted into any office, are obliged by our laws to receive the sacrament as a qualification; and, consequently, that the minister is obliged by the same laws to admit any person that offers himself upon this occasion, to the holy communion, however unfit he may have rendered himself by his word and actions? But, in answer to this, it must be considered, that the power with which Christ himself invested his Church, of admitting persons into her communion, and excluding them from it, is what no human laws can deprive her of. And, therefore, when the laws require men to receive this holy Sacrament to qualify themselves for offices, they always suppose that they must first qualify themselves according to the holy laws of the Church, which are founded on those of the Gospel of Christ. So that it would be a very great injury to our legislators (as being a very uncharitable opinion of them) to imagine that if an unbaptized or excommunicate person, a deist, or notorious sinner, should happen to obtain an office, that they intend to oblige the Church to admit persons, under these bad dispositions, to be partakers of the blessed Eucharist.

* Chrysostom's Hom. 83, in Matt. 26.

The primitive Church of Christ was so cautious in this respect, that even persons, in the highest stations, were rejected, if they offered themselves unworthily, of which we have a remarkable instance in the case of the Emperor Theodosius, whom St. Ambrose boldly and openly refused, upon the commission of a barbarous crime. The story being worth the reader's notice, I shall therefore give it him in a few words. There being a sedition among the people of Thessalonica, the Emperor ordered the guard to fall upon them in heat, who in that hurry and confusion, destroyed several thousands of these poor wretches. Soon after which, he, coming to Milan, was going to offer himself at St. Ambrose's Church, to receive the communion. But the good bishop (when he heard of it) met him courageously at the church doors, and obliged him to return, and first repent himself of his crime. 'With what eyes,' saith he, 'can you behold the temple of Him who is the common Lord of all? With what feet can you tread this holy place? How can you put out those hands to receive the blessed elements, which are yet reeking with innocent blood? How can you take the precious blood into that mouth, which gave out such barbarous and bloody orders? Depart, therefore, and take heed that you do not increase your first crime by the commission of a second. Submit yourself to the bond which the lord of the world has been pleased to bind you with, which is only medicinal, and intended to work your cure.' *

* Theod. Hist. Eccl. l. 5.

This repulse the Emperor acquiesced in, and offered himself no more to those holy rites, till he had in tears repented of the sad effects of his hasty anger. I have chosen to give this instance, because it is what the Church of England has thought fit to record in her homilies, and to mention with marks of approbation and applause. *

* Second Part of the Homily of the right use of the Church. p. 141.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE BAPTISMAL SERVICES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

THE two sacraments, which Christ has ordained in his Church, are of prime importance in the economy of redemption; because they form as it were, the very foundation on which Christianity itself is built: the Lord's Supper, as shewing forth his atonement and death, by which our salvation is effected,—and Baptism, as exhibiting the means by which we are rendered capable of enjoying its appropriate blessings. A right knowledge and reception of the sacraments, therefore, conduce to our happiness and stability in the divine life; but an error or misconception respecting their nature, design, and tendency, is sure to lead us to wrong views of our condition, as well as to erroneous notions with regard to every other article of the Christian faith, with which they are inseparably connected. We cannot carry up a good superstructure, without laying a right foundation on which to build our edifice.

Although there is no peculiar mystery in the sacraments, more than in the other doctrines of the Gospel, yet extraordinary pains seem to have been taken to mysticise and render them unintelli-

gible to common apprehensions. Some unduly exalt them, as the ministers of the Church of Rome, and others who have imbibed their sentiments on the subject, by putting on them, an exclusively literal, instead of a spiritual and figurative meaning; and others, have too much disparaged them, by regarding them as empty, unmeaning, and lifeless ceremonies, of little use and importance. Both views involve the most serious consequences; the former, by substituting elements and creatures in the place of the vicarious merits and grace of the Saviour, which the sacraments only represent; and the latter, by thinking too lightly of means, which he has been pleased to appoint, as vehicles for the attainment of "his blessing and life for evermore."* These errors arise partly from a want of a correct knowledge of Scripture, and a right interpretation thereof, according to the analogy of faith; and partly from crude and imperfect thoughts on the subject itself, which are sure to be followed by confusion of language in describing it; for what I understand imperfectly, I am sure to speak, or write about, incorrectly and obscurely.

Had there been less eagerness to construct a gainful and tyrannical scheme by the Romish Church, to overawe the human mind, into a blind submission to its fallible dictates, and more pains taken to ascertain the meaning of the Spirit of God, in his revealed word, by "comparing things

* Psalm cxxxiii. 3.

spiritual," with one another, we should never have heard of the perversion of our Lord's words, "take eat, this is my body," in the one sacrament; nor of the confounding of the outward sign with the thing signified, in the other. A right "understanding in the way of godliness," would have saved the church, and the world, the pain of hearing conflicting opinions on these fundamental points. And here it is with unfeigned sorrow I remark, that our Reformers, in constructing the baptismal service of our Church, have sometimes used language which has unintentionally on their part, given rise to the most contradictory opinions. Though sound in their own views, as to the nature and effects of baptism, they have occasionally employed some terms to express them, which have led others to form ambiguous and unscriptural conclusions; where they themselves had not the least doubt on the subject. We are certain they never intended to identify the outward symbols, and signs, with the inward and spiritual grace, which the sacraments denote. They kept both widely distinct in their own minds; and assigned them their separate province, and wished others to do the same. The use of conventional terms is apt to lead those, who do not perfectly understand their precise signification, into error and perplexity. This has been the case with regard to Baptism. Through the adoption of terms current in the earliest ages of the Church, many have unwarrantably supposed, that our venerable Reformers meant to convey a meaning,

which it is evident from the whole scope and tenor of their writings, they never designed to convey. How desirable then is it, that all formularies of faith, and every ritual of divine service, should be couched in such explicit language, that to use the prophet's words, "he who runs may read it."*

Although I have not the least wish to revive the controversy concerning baptism, which took place about twenty-seven years ago; yet, in defence of the views maintained in this chapter, on that important subject, I cannot refrain from citing the language used by Dr. Mant, now Lord Bishop of Down and Connor, in his tracts put forth and circulated throughout the kingdom on that occasion. 'Baptism,' says the Bishop, 'is a new birth, by which we enter into the new world, the new creation, the blessings, and spiritualities of the kingdom.' From this time forward, we have a new principle put into us, the spirit of grace; which, besides our soul and body, is a principle of action. So also, "a new principle of life infused." By that sacrament we are made Christians, and are born anew of water and of the Holy Spirit. By Baptism exclusively, is spiritual regeneration conveyed; and that no other than baptismal regeneration is possible in this world; that to suppose baptism separated from spiritual regeneration, is to strip it of its sacramental character, to deny its inward and spiritual grace, is heresy; is, in some sense, doing despite to the spirit of grace.'

* Habakkuk ii. 2.

Here then is abundance *usque ad nauseam* of merely gratuitous assumption and naked assertion incapable of the least proof, and resting on no other foundation than the mere *ipse dixit* of the abetters of the system! In fact assertions falsified by reason, observation, and experience, contradictory to the current of Scripture, the Articles, the Homilies, and other rituals of the Church of England, when soberly explained; the testimony of all the primitive orthodox Fathers of the Church of Christ, and all sound theologians from the reformation down to this hour. These sweeping propositions involve absolute absurdities; for if the mode of reasoning adopted by the Roman Church, the Tractators, and those who have preceeded them, as well as those that follow their fallacious track, be put into a syllogistical form, the conclusions fairly drawn from their premises, whether positive or negative, will not only infallibly conduct us to the *ratio ad absurdum*, but involve consequences which God solemnly abhors, which his word denies, and which the Church in her rubrical declaration on the subject does not warrant.

Their universal affirmative proposition proves abundantly too much by drawing a general inference from a particular premise, which sound logicians repudiate, and sober reasoners reject as utterly fallacious; and the negative argument based upon it, proves infinitely too little and too much at the same time, and the masters, in the art of reasoning, universally concur in declaring

that it is a perilous attempt to prove an absolute negative. Upon their fictitious system, 'every baptized infant is inevitably born again of the Spirit of God;' (though his word affirms no such thing,) let the parents and sponsors have been ever so negligent in their duty, and careless in the performance of it; and all unbaptized infants, who, through the visitation of God, and the inability of the minister often to arrive in time for the administration of the rite, have not been able to obtain the privileges which it confers, are uncharitably consigned to an exclusion from heaven, without any fault or omission of their own. Or if that be not their final destiny, they must be sent first into purgatory for a long specific period, or finally to the imaginary *limbus patrum* of Catholic Doctors, to await the dispensation of the Pope, or some other person equally arrogant with himself, for their future disposal.*

Gracious God! is it possible that men calling themselves Christian divines, should be so utterly ignorant of thy heavenly will, or so reckless of the consequences which it must produce, as to believe that they serve thee, by flatly opposing it? The abettors of the awful delusion either tie down the all-wise God to their own groundless notion of the necessary efficacy of the sacraments, which is opposed to unanswerable

* As infants dying before they commit actual sin are undoubtedly saved through the merits of Christ, and regenerated by his Spirit; and as the Gospel is a dispensation of mercy and kindness, there seems no valid reason for denying the funeral rights of the Church to unbaptized infants. Matt. xix. 13, 14.

proofs to the contrary; or wilfully and wittingly forget, that he employs various other means unconnected with them, to effect his gracious purposes towards infants and adults. Are these Pseudo divines and philosophers, so unacquainted with their Bibles and sound theology, that we must reiterate in opposition to their papistical figments, that God accomplishes the spiritual regeneration of fallen and depraved creatures, by means of his own appointment, independent of the use of the sacraments, which he no where tells us are always efficacious, as an *opus operatum*?

That baptism is sometimes made the vehicle of regenerating grace, we rejoice to admit; and to deny that position would not only be a limiting of the power and sovereignty of the Holy One of Israel, but involve us in a measure of the same condemnation chargeable on the tractarian system. That some children are regenerated at the baptismal font by the gracious operations of his Spirit blessing the divinely appointed means, I grant without the least hesitation; but the fact of their regeneration is always as ascertainable by "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness," by their spirit, life, and deportment, as a healthy and vigorous tree is known by its appropriate fruits. But can it be safely affirmed of all baptized infants, when arrived at years of discretion that they exhibit discriminating marks of regeneration? Assuredly not. I apprehend if we appeal to observation and stubborn facts, the answer must in a great majority of cases, with-

out the least breach of charity, be made in the negative.

To this unchristian and unscriptural doctrine of the necessary efficacy of the sacraments, which is an absurd revival of the Romish doctrine of the *opus operatum*, all the errors of Puseyism and its adherents must be ascribed. Like certain empirics in the medical art, who use one medicine as a catholicon for all diseases, the Tractators have discovered, in an hour of darkness, that baptism is a panacea—a charm for the cure of all spiritual maladies, which it instantly banishes with a kind of talismanical power. I am not now, God forbid that I should, speaking irreverently or disparagingly of a sacred ordinance, but only exposing the fallacies of those who abuse it to purposes of spiritual pride, ambition, tyranny, and delusion. If our opponents will adopt the hypothetical form of argument drawn from scripture and fact, they will soon arrive at the truth of the whole matter; and it may be stated thus: 'baptism when properly administered, and rightly received by faith (as in the case of adults, for infants cannot exercise repentance and faith) conveys the grace of regeneration, or the new birth. Some have received baptism rightly and by faith; therefore all such have derived from it, the grace of regeneration, or the new birth.' Such a mode of argumentation, adopted throughout this work, is as consonant with scripture, as it is with reason, common sense, and universal experience.

Again, the fallacy of the Tractators, who adopt

the idea that baptism is always efficacious, and that the unbaptized are out of the pale of God's covenant, may be easily proved by the following line of argument, which is irrefragably true.

Were not many of the Jews baptized by John, and Simon Magus, by St. Peter, and Demas, by some one of the apostles or their disciples? And yet, who will undertake to say that in all these instances awful evidence was not given of a lack of the new birth, which must be made manifest by a change of heart and life, and by available piety? Can we fairly predicate of such characters that they are "the children of God, the real members of Christ, and inheritors of his holy kingdom?" I know the caveats which the abettors of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration lodge, and the sophistical reasons which they use against the abuse of their erroneous system. But can their weak attempts in this way repair the mischievous consequences which it involves, or remove the insuperable objections and difficulties with which it is clogged? I trow not.

Further; was not Samson "a Nazarite from his birth," and blessed of the Lord? Was not Jeremiah also sanctified from the womb, and qualified by the gifts and graces of the Spirit, "to be a prophet of the Lord unto all nations?" And was not such sanctification, though it were but incipient in its degree, a sure sign, an irresistible proof of their previous regeneration? Can the former exist in the heart, without being demonstrative of the existence of the latter?

Could the venerable precursor of Christ, St. John, have been filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb; could many rejoice at his birth, yea, would a God of truth also, by the promise of an angel, go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord;" if that good and great man had not been really a partaker of regenerating grace, a heir of immortal glory before his submission to the rites of circumcision and baptism? It will be impossible, I conceive, for the supporters of the opposite system, to invalidate the force of these scriptural proofs of the bestowment of regenerating grace, independent of baptism. They incontrovertibly decide the position, that the new birth and all its holy concomitants, may be produced without baptism, simply by the all-animating agency of the Holy Ghost.

If these should be said to be extraordinary exceptions to God's usual mode of effecting the change, then I will adduce other examples to demonstrate that he regenerates, renews, and sanctifies men's souls, and makes them his sons by adoption and grace, where baptismal water is not resorted to for that purpose.

St. Paul, by the voice of inspiration, declared to the Corinthians, "that Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." But would it have been a matter of exultation to him if he had not been a successful instrument in regener-

ating men's souls by the blessing of the Spirit of the Lord upon the Gospel which he preached, as the power of God unto salvation. He affirmed of the Galatian converts, "ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," though every one of them had been "born in sin, and were by nature the children of wrath even as others." Could they have attained this exalted privilege and relationship to God, except they had been born again according to our Saviour's requisition?

If the Tractators can solve the difficulty upon their own system, I must confess I cannot upon any other than my own.

St. James, eminent for divine knowledge and holiness, ascribes probably his own, and certainly the regeneration of those to whom he dedicates his epistle, to the sovereign pleasure of God, who alone can accomplish it. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth (as the instrument) that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." With this affirmation the apostle Peter fully concurs in his address to the strangers scattered throughout the eastern primitive Churches, whom, he avows by inspiration of God "to have been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

St. John strenuously insists that "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and that every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him;" and confirms his solemn decision by averring as a mat-

ter of fact and experience, " that whatsoever (or whosever) is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." And then in a tone of triumphant challenge, adds, " Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." And to shew the incorruptibility of regenerating grace, he affirms, " Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin (presumptuously, deliberately, and constantly, as the unregenerate do) because he is born of God." Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter from him who leaned on the bosom of his divine Master, and knew his righteous will: " As many as received Christ, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, (nor of water as the outward sign of an inward and spiritual grace) but of God;" and of him only. " For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly: neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God."

I am entitled then to say, 'Surely there is much contained in this unscriptural statement to unsettle the minds of real Christians!' Surely there is some great mismanagement at the helm! Can one forbear saying, here is a noble vessel indeed, ample in her dimensions, firmly built, well found

with all kinds of stores, capable of great service: to whom is it owing, that she has been left thus to float to and fro on the face of the deep, without a certain destination?* A slight appeal to the writings of our leading reformers will demonstate, that they did not restrict regeneration to baptism; but to the saving agency and operation of the Holy Ghost, who alone can renew our hearts unto righteousness, and "sanctify us, and all the elect people of God." A few decisive passages must suffice our present purpose.

Archbishop Cranmer is unequivocal in declaring, that the inward grace does not always accompany the outward sign. He says, 'As in Baptism, those who come feignedly, and those that come unfeignedly, both be washed with the sacramental water, but both be not washed with the Holy Ghost, and clothed with Christ: so also in the Lord's Supper,' &c.† And again, 'Whosoever cometh to that water, being of the age of discretion, must examine himself duly; lest if he come unworthily, (none otherwise than he would come unto common water,) he be not renewed in Christ, but instead of salvation, he receiveth his damnation.' Does then this venerable metropolitan and martyr doubt "the inward and spiritual grace" of baptism, and deny its sacramental character? No one assuredly will affirm it.

Latimer, bishop and martyr, speaks more directly

* See an able answer written in 1815, to the Rev. Dr. Mant's Two Tracts, by the late Rev. John Scott, M.A. Vicar of North Ferriby, &c. † Fathers of the English Church, Vol. III. p. 335.

upon it. 'Christ saith, "Except a man be born again (from above) he cannot see the kingdom of God." He must have regeneration. And what is this regeneration? It is not to be christened in water, (as these firebrands * expound it,) and nothing else. How is it to be expounded then? St. Peter sheweth, that one place of Scripture declareth another. Saith St. Peter, we be born again. How? Not by a mortal seed, but by an immortal. What is this immortal seed? By the word of the living God. By the word of God preached and opened.† Thus cometh in our new birth.'‡

Hooper, bishop and martyr, thus avows his sentiments:—'Such as be baptized must remember, that repentance and faith precede this external sign; and in Christ the purgation was inwardly obtained, before the external sign was given. So that there are two kinds of baptism, and both necessary. The one interior, which is the cleansing of the heart, the drawing of the Father, the operation of the Holy Ghost: and this baptism is in man, when he believeth, and trusteth that Christ is the only actor of his salvation.' Thus be the infants only examined concerning repentance and faith, before they be baptized with water; at the contemplation of which faith, God purgeth the soul. Then is the exterior sign and deed not to purge the heart; but to confirm, manifest, and open to the world, that this child is God's. A

* Meaning the Papists. † 1 Peter i. 23—25.

‡ Fathers, Vol. II. p. 654, 655.

traitor may receive the crown, and yet be true king nothing the more ; so a hypocrite and infidel may receive the external sign of baptism, and yet be no Christian man, any the more ; as Simon Magus and others.* Frith, the Martyr, Clement, Dr. Nowell's catechism, and other high authorities may be adduced, to substantiate the same fact.

The Fathers and other eminent divines of the Church of England, bear similar testimony to the truth under consideration. No authorities however, be it recollected, but the sacred Scriptures, and the sanctioned writings of our Church, however respectable, should be considered as absolutely binding upon us, as Christians or churchmen.

But as so many now appeal with great confidence to the Fathers, to justify their erroneous opinions on baptism, a few passages may be selected from their writings, to evince to a demonstration, that they did not actually confound "the sign with the thing signified ;" nor suppose them to be inseparable from each other. St. Austin in the Homily of common prayer and the sacraments, says, 'If sacraments had not a certain similitude of those things of which they be sacraments, they should be no sacraments at all. And of this similitude, they do, for the most part, receive the names of the self-same things they signify.

Theodoret's opinion, as often quoted by the old writers, is, 'Gratia sacramentum aliquando præcedit, aliquando sequitur, aliquando nec sequitur.' 'Grace sometimes precedes the sacrament,

* Fathers, &c. Vol. V. p. 169—173.

sometimes follows it, and sometimes does not even follow it.'

St. Augustine, (on the 77th Psalm,) thus resolves; 'Omnes eundem potum spiritualem liberunt, sed non in omnibus bene placitum est Deo: et cum essent omnibus communia sacramenta, non communis erat omnibus gratia, quæ sacramentorum virtus est. Sicut et nunc, jam revelatâ fide, quæ tunc velabatur, omnibus, in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti baptizatis, commune est lavacrum regenerationis; sed ipsa gratia, cujus sunt sacramenta, quâ membra corporis Christi cum suo capite regenerata sunt, non communis est omnibus.

"All did drink the same spiritual drink, but not with all was God well pleased: and whereas the sacraments were common to all, the grace was not common to all, which constitutes the virtue of the sacraments. So also now, when faith is revealed, which was then veiled, the laver of regeneration is common to all, who are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; but the grace itself, of which they are sacraments, and by which the members of the body of Christ are regenerated with their head, is not common to all.'

St. Chrysostom, in his fifth homily on St. Matthew, observes, 'Many are baptized with water, who are not baptized with the Holy Ghost; they seem to be the sons of God in respect of their baptism, but indeed they are not the sons of God, because they are not baptized with the Holy Ghost.'

St. Jerome has a similar passage in his commentary on the third chapter of his epistle to the Galatians.

Among the more modern divines, Hooker, Bishop Beveridge, Bishop Hopkins, Archbishop Leighton, the learned Joseph Mede, Barrow, Archbishop Tillotson, and Bishop Bradford, make the same broad distinction between "the outward sign, and the inward spiritual grace." But after all, we should be well aware, that 'no human authority, however great, is admissible for the foundation of a doctrine, except that of the inspired writings.' 'To the law and the testimony, if men speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,'*

I will adduce a few passages from both testaments, to prove, that water is used repeatedly in both, as an emblem only of the grace, blessings, and operations, of the Holy Ghost, in renewing and sanctifying the polluted hearts of fallen men, and this with the strictest reason and propriety; for as that simple element cleanses the body when applied to it, so the Spirit of the Lord purifies our hearts "from dead works to serve the living God,"† by his vivifying and regenerating influences on the mind; and thus becomes the sole and efficient agent of our regeneration, sanctification, and salvation, both present and future. God lays the foundation of the spiritual temple in us; "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts; and he brings forth the headstone

* Isa. viii. 20. † Heb. ix. 14.

thereof with shoutings, crying Grace, Grace, unto it."*

The first passage which I cite to corroborate these remarks, is from the prophet Isaiah. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit on thy seed, and my blessing on thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses." † And this language, significant of the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost, in effecting our new birth unto righteousness, is explained by similar terms employed by Ezekiel, to show by what means God will, in the latter day glory, accomplish the restoration of the Jews to holiness and happiness, and the recovery of their forfeited privileges. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you." To illustrate what is meant by this "mystical washing away of sin," it is added, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." ‡ To this agrees the declaration of Zechariah, when speaking of the spiritual purgation of Jerusalem. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to

* Zech. iv. 6—10. † Isa. xliv. 3—6.
‡ Ezek. xxxvi. 25—30.

the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness."*

Further, all orthodox divines admit, that baptism under the Gospel dispensation, is synonymous in its import, nature, and design with the rite of circumcision, under the law. Was a mere observance of the outward sign, without a correspondent regard to the "inward and spiritual grace" signified by it, of any benefit whatever to the subject of it? Certainly not; as the words of Jeremiah and St. Paul decisively prove. "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn, that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings."† "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God."‡

Now, what the apostle here affirms of circumcision, is unanswerably applicable to baptism. He is not a Christian who is washed only with the outward laver of water; but he only, whose heart is renewed and sanctified by the internal agency of the Holy Ghost.

That memorable discourse of our Saviour to Nicodemus, which the Church of Rome first, and next those Anglican theologists, who have unhap-

* Zech. xiii. 1. † Jer. iv. 4. ‡ Rom. ii. 28, 29.

pily, for the Protestant Church, adopted its delusive sentiments, gives no countenance whatever to the notion of baptismal regeneration, as the necessary effect of the ordinance, but quite the contrary.

To Nicodemus, coming to Jesus, as the accredited messenger of heaven, in order to ascertain, for himself and the whole Jewish nation, the mode of acceptance with God, and the obtainment of eternal life, our blessed Lord, made the following reply; "Jesus answered, and said unto him, verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, how can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe

not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things."*

Here most obviously the water is spoken of by Christ in the same sense as that used in the afore cited passages—namely, as a significant emblem of the operations of the Holy Ghost, in cleansing the heart from its defilement, and consecrating it to the service of God in his church on earth, and qualifying it for the enjoyment of his spiritual kingdom in heaven. And there is much propriety in the use of this metaphorical expression; for as water naturally refreshes, purifies, and fertilizes the earth, so doth the Holy Spirit, in his work of regenerating grace, animate, sanctify, and fertilize, every soul of man, who is made a partaker of his blessed operations. The expressions, "born again,"† and "born of the Spirit," which is compared by our Saviour to the uncontrolled, efficacious, and mysterious effects of "the wind blowing where it listeth," are incontrovertible proofs that the Spirit of the Lord is the exclusive and mighty agent in producing "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness" in all them that are made the children of grace. ‡

To reiterate the words of St. Chrysostom, "many are baptized with water, who are not baptized with the Holy Ghost; they seem to be the sons of God in respect of their baptism, but indeed they

* John iii. 1—13.

† γεννηθη ανωθεν, born from above, born from heaven.

‡ John iii. 8. Catechism.

are not the sons of God, because they are not baptized with the Holy Ghost."

The Church of England employs the same forcible language in her articles and homilies, to restrict the benefits to be derived from the sacraments exclusively to the proper recipients thereof. I will quote the words of the twenty-fifth article, which is as follows: "the sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation: but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves damnation, as St. Paul saith." * In the twenty-sixth, it is asserted, that the unworthiness of evil ministers do not take away the effects of Christ's ordinance by their wickedness, "nor is the grace of God's gifts diminished from such as by faith and rightly receive the same." The twenty-seventh, twenty-eighth, and twenty-ninth articles, use language equally expressive on the subject in question.

The Church in her homily for Whit Sunday, enters into a full discussion on regeneration, and the third chapter of St. John's Gospel, without even the mention of baptism. "Where the Holy Ghost worketh, there nothing is impossible; as may further also appear, by the inward regeneration and sanctification of mankind," &c. For as there are three several and sundry persons in the

* Article XXV.

Deity; so have they three several and sundry offices proper unto each of them; the Father to create, the Son to redeem, the Holy Ghost to sanctify and regenerate. Whereof the last, the more it is hid from our understanding, the more it ought to move all men to wonder at the secret and mighty working of God's Holy Spirit, which is within us. For it is the Holy Ghost, and no other thing, that doth quicken the minds of men, stirring up good and godly motions in their hearts, which are agreeable to the will and commandment of God; such as otherwise of their own crooked and perverse nature they should never have.'

Observation and experience fully confirm the views which have been taken of the sacraments, and expose the unscriptural notions of those who affirm, without a shadow of proof, 'that spiritual regeneration is exclusively conveyed by baptism, and that no other than baptismal regeneration is possible in this world.' Facts are stubborn unanswerable things, whether in religion or in our temporal concerns, which must finally overwhelm the sophistry of those who have the hardihood to oppose them.

But do the abettors of such an heterodox system see the unavoidable consequences which it involves? It is clearly this, that baptism is absolutely necessary to salvation, and that we cannot become heirs of salvation without it. Will any of them be prepared to admit, in its full extent, this consequence concerning baptism? Will they exclude from the possibility of salvation the whole

body of the Quakers, and all those children of Antipædobaptists, who die without receiving adult baptism ; and all those who are Antipædobaptists in principle, yet never receive either infant or adult baptism ? Do all these perish without hope ? Will they maintain that no misapprehension, and no outward situation, in which baptism could not be procured, will make any exception ? Are all the children of Christians who die unbaptized, excluded from the kingdom of God,—not to speak of the children of Jews, and Heathens, and Mahomedans, who die before the commission of actual sin, but die unbaptized ? I cannot imagine that those who hold that baptism is necessarily regeneration, are prepared to admit these consequences, which would be more repugnant to all our ideas of the divine mercy, than any thing that either the most zealous opposers of Calvinism have charged upon the system, or the most rigid and wild enthusiast, who disgraced the name of Calvinist, ever advanced on the subject.

But let us come to matter of fact, and observe attentively the working of the system. Let us first make a careful survey of the state of our own families, and afterwards extend our observations with candour, and yet with fidelity, to the world around us. And what do we, in a judgment of charity, behold ? Do we really discover that every child within the precincts of our own households, from the age of three years and upwards, has been savingly regenerated ? Where are those substantial proofs of the fact, which the existence

of so divine a transformation will always afford? Are penitence and abhorrence of sin, and love of righteousness, and faith in Christ and ardent devotion to God, and dutiful affection to parents, and prompt obedience to all their lawful commands, and due regard to the claims of society, openly conspicuous amongst the generality of our children? Would to God they were; then we could without hesitation coincide in the belief of some, that baptism has a universal and necessary efficacy. But if, in the great majority of cases, we perceive the absence of these marks of a renewed mind, in a radical preference for evil, and hatred to good, and habitual neglect of God and salvation by Christ, and dislike to prayer for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and attachment to the vanities of the world, and disobedience to parents, and reckless disregard to the duties which they owe to their neighbours, to what fairer conclusion can we arrive, than this, that grace was not conveyed to their souls in baptism, perhaps for want in most instances, of faith and sincere prayer to God in the parents and sponsors, for his blessing on the sacred ordinance?

Are not breath and motion, and the free circulation of the vital fluid, from the heart through the arteries and veins, sure indications of bodily life and health? And is there no evidence by which we are able to test the spiritual life and vigour of a regenerate soul? Are not "the fruits of the Spirit which are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness,

temperance," and the crucifixion of the flesh with the affections and lusts, divine graces altogether appropriate to those who are born of God? But it will be urged in reply by the advocates of baptismal regeneration, 'that grace was infused into the soul in the performance of the sacred rite, but has been lost through the influence of evil examples and the prevalence of temptation.' Is the grace then of the omnipotent Spirit of the Lord so tender and delicate a plant, that it cannot stand a temporary trial, or resist for the short period of infancy and childhood, the chilling blasts of temptation, from the world, the flesh, and the devil? St. Peter, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, formed a more correct idea of the permanency of divine grace in the souls of truly regenerated persons; when he says, "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." * The testimony of the beloved Apostle John, is confirmatory of the same truth: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit (or make a practice of) sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin (presumptuously and with the full consent of his mind, as the unregenerate do,) because he is born of God." †

Of what utility then is baptism? And what are the benefits which it conveys? We answer, much every way; chiefly, because it is an initiatory rite ordained by Christ, as the door of ad-

* See the Author's Lecture on Baptism, Vol. II. 1 Pet. i. 23.
† 1 John iii. 9.

mission into his visible Church, entitling the baptized to the privileges of divine ordinances, which, by the blessing of God on their due improvement, may truly become " the means of grace, and the hope of glory." And in certain instances God does most probably accompany " the outward sign, with the inward spiritual grace," to manifest his sovereignty as the dispenser of heavenly benefits, to those upon whom he pleases to bestow them, and in answer to the prayers of his faithful ministers and people. To deny this, would be " to limit the Holy One of Israel," and make his ordinance a comparatively useless ceremony ;—a derogation this, from his honour, which we should tremble to commit. Besides, as the twenty-seventh article expresses, ' Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly, are grafted into the Church ; the promise of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost are visibly signed and sealed. Faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer to God. The baptism of young children, therefore, is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.'

To say the least, baptism is of primary importance, even where no blessing immediately follows its administration ; because the solemn dedication of immense multitudes to the service of the Trinity

of Divine Persons, must give them as they grow up to years of maturity, some knowledge of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the spiritual blessings which they respectively communicate: they must be taught to pay some regard to "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost." *

Some perhaps will complain that this scriptural statement reduces the effect of the ordinance to narrow limits, as to the most of those to whom it is administered. I reply that their thinking so must be entirely ascribed to their having entertained for a long time unreasonably high ideas of the efficacy of baptism, much higher most probably than they entertain of the virtue of the Lord's supper. St. Paul answers the same objection urged against his doctrine with respect to circumcision, in the second and third chapters of the epistle to the Romans. And I would seriously caution every one against reputing it a small privilege, to have been outwardly 'called to a state of salvation,' by being received into the visible Church of Christ, placed under Christian instruction, numbered amongst those "to whom the oracles of God are committed;" and who are addressed by the Church as persons who in order to verify the grace and efficacy of regeneration, if they really possess it, are bound by their profession 'to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him; that as he died

* 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

and rose again for us, so should we who are baptized, die from sin and rise again to righteousness, continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living.' *

Shew us these legitimate and undeniable fruits in baptized children, or adults, and we shall have no hesitation in admitting that they have been really 'born again, and have been made partakers of the kingdom of heaven.' But where this scriptural evidence is wanting, we cannot believe that they were regenerated in baptism, any more than we can be brought to believe in contradiction to the testimony of our senses, that the consecrated bread in the sacrament, is truly and substantially the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What then is the obvious tendency of teaching 'that baptism is necessarily regeneration, that no other is possible in this world, and that the outward sign is inseparable from the "inward spiritual grace," the very thing signified by it? What, but to reduce the Scriptures to a mere caput mortuum, a dead, inefficient mass? to strip them of whatever, in their important contents, is suited to arrest the attention, to awaken the conscience, to interest the feelings, to stimulate the hopes and fears of mankind upon a subject big with the most momentous consequences for time and eternity.

What is the direct tendency of such doctrines, but to extinguish all scriptural religion amongst us;

* Baptismal Service.

to reduce Christianity to a system of external signs and distinctions, and to substitute for its humble, holy, vital spirit, that compound of self-righteous pride and antinomian licentiousness, which characterized the Jewish Church in its most degenerate days?

What else can be its necessary effect upon the minds of the baptized, than to produce that false and fatal confidence, which proved so ruinous to the Jewish nation, both as to its civil and ecclesiastical polity? The Jews were ever ready to exclaim and boast of their religious privileges, saying, "the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord," * are we. They gloried in being the descendants of Abraham, "the father of the faithful, and in being admitted into covenant with God by circumcision. In this confidence they esteemed themselves secure, and fell into the neglect of that "righteousness and true holiness," to which all their privileges and distinctions were intended to lead them. Against such a fatal mistake their prophets and Messiah himself, frequently warned them. "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father, for I say unto you, that God is able even of these stones, to raise up children unto Abraham. And now the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down

* Jer. vii. 4.

and cast into the fire. Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom," those unconverted Jews who thought themselves such, "shall be cast into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." * I would not be so uncharitable as to insinuate, that the supporters of exclusive baptismal regeneration, are desirous to produce such a false and disastrous confidence, as that which destroyed multitudes of the Jews; I believe the contrary; and recollect the cautions (though not sufficient to prevent the dreadful evil,) that they occasionally put in against such a construction. But I am not concerned so much with their intentions, as with the natural tendency of the system, and the practical effects which are likely to flow, and have flowed to a frightful extent, from its prevalence amongst us; namely, a delusive and an unscriptural conviction, that we are necessarily made "members of Christ, the children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven" in baptism; whilst countless numbers of us give demonstrative proofs, by a wicked and unrighteous life, that we are still "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity." † Doctor Young shall correct their fatal error:

'Ye baptised infidels;
Ye worse for washing, washed to fouler stains.'—YOUNG.

* Matt. iii. 2—12, and viii. 11—13. † Acts viii. 23.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HYPOTHETICAL PRINCIPLE AS IT REGARDS CHARACTER, AND PRIVILEGE, AND BAPTISM, PERVADES THE SCRIPTURES, AND THE SERVICES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND—IMPROVEMENTS SUGGESTED.

EVERY attentive reader of the Scriptures, must have observed, that whole bodies of Christians are constantly addressed as partakers of the most exalted privileges and invaluable blessings. They are spoken to as persons who "being justified by faith have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ;" as "reconciled to God, as washed, sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God;" "as sons of God, into whose hearts God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son, whereby they cry, Abba, Father;" as "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ;" as "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of their inheritance, as persons quickened from a death in trespasses and sins;" as "having all their sins forgiven them for Christ's sake;" as "those in whom God hath begun a good work, which he will perform unto the day of Christ;" in a word, as "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, that they should shew forth the

praises of him who hath called them out of darkness, into his marvellous light."

With regard to these and various other passages of holy Writ, seeing they are addressed to societies consisting of mixed characters, good and bad, "tares and wheat," a question naturally arises,—how are they to be interpreted? Does all this exalted and delightful language express nothing more, than was common to Simon Magus with St. Peter? to the incestuous Corinthian with St. Paul? to Diotrephes with St. John? Is its meaning to be so lowered down and evaporated, that it may apply to all professors of Christianity, not excepting the most hypocritical, or the most profligate, as well as to the most consistent and honourable? Common readers will doubtless be startled at such questions. But true enough it is, that they are not superfluous. A method has been ingeniously devised, by which all these terms, apparently expressive of an internal state, 'are made to mean nothing else, but external privileges;' and from the leaven of this doctrine, we fear that some of our clergy are infected.' *

Examples may be quoted from the very Epistles in which such exalted language is used of whole churches, to evince that it is only to be understood of some of its members absolutely and unqualifiedly, and of the rest in a professional and hypothetical sense only, being such in name merely, and not in reality. St. Paul "thanked

* See a refutation of Dr. Taylor's system, by the Rev. J. Venn, M. A. Rector of Clapham.

God through Jesus Christ, for all his Roman converts, that their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world;" * and yet he cautioned them "to mark them which caused divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which they had learned, and to avoid them. "For they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple." †

The Corinthian church was collectively "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, eminent for the grace of God, enriched by him with all utterance and knowledge, so that they came behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and yet notwithstanding they possessed "the word of wisdom and knowledge, and faith, and the gifts of healing by the same spirit; a power to work sundry kinds of miracles; the gifts of prophecy and of discerning of spirits; and of speaking divers kinds of tongues; and the interpretation of tongues;" ‡ there were unchristian contentions among them respecting the priority and deference due to their respective ministers. One preferred St. Paul, another St. Peter; another Apollos; and another Christ. § Thus "Christ was divided," and robbed of the supreme glory due to his name; which "proved that although some of them were "spiritual," and walked agreeably to their "high vocation," yet that others were "carnal," and acted unworthy

* Rom. i. 8. † Ibid. xvi. 17, 18. ‡ 1 Cor. xii. 7—11.
§ Ibid. i. 11, 12.

of the sacred name by which they were called. Some of them were of a litigious spirit, others "did wrong, and defrauded their neighbours." One was an incestuous character; and some of the members instead of visiting the unnatural crime with the severity it deserved, seemed rather to connive at it.* Others amongst them abused the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to purposes of intemperance; in consequence of which they were "chastised by God." †

The Galatians cordially received the Gospel, and carried their admiration of St. Paul so far, that they were ready (if occasion required,) to pluck out their eyes and give them to the Apostle as a cheerful sacrifice in behalf of truth; and yet they were soon corrupted from the simplicity of their faith in Christ by the Judaizing teachers, whose heretical notions they imbibed, insomuch that the Apostle "stood in doubt of them," and was afraid, lest he had bestowed upon them labour in vain.

St. Paul thanked God in behalf of the Philippians for their fruits of faith and love, feeling assured with regard to some of them, "that he who had begun a good work in them would perform it until the day of Christ;" ‡ and yet he found fault with several of the members of that Church, because they acted contrary to their Christian profession; "many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they

* 1 Cor. v. 1—13. † Ibid. xi. 30. ‡ Phil. i. 6.

are enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things." *

The Hebrew converts did much to evidence their apparent sincerity and attachment to Christ by "taking compassion on the apostle Paul in his bonds, and suffering joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and more enduring substance;" and yet in time of temptation they were in danger of total apostacy.†

The Corinthians were exhorted "not to receive the grace of God in vain," and St. John admonished the elect lady and her children, to whom he dedicated his second epistle," to look to themselves, that they might not lose the things which they had wrought, but receive a full reward."‡

Now, let us only consider the circumstances under which this language and these epistles were applied to the different churches, and we shall at once clearly perceive, that they were adopted on the common ground of their having made an open profession of Christianity before the whole world, upon the supposition of the sincerity of all the parties making them. But that all were sincere in their avowal of faith in Christ, was evidently not the case, otherwise the apostles would not have reproved the want of gracious dispositions in some, and the unchristian practices of others, who brought disgrace on the sacred cause, which they

* Phil. iv. 17—21. † Heb. vi. 1—20.

‡ 2 John, 8.

pretended to serve from interested motives. That some were sincere, is self-evident by the sacrifices they made for Christ, "loving not their lives, even unto death;"* that they might finish their course with joy, and testify to all the gospel of the grace of God." Never could there be a period chosen to justify the adoption of such language with regard to whole societies of men, as when the very profession of Christianity brought with it imminent danger to their property, liberty, and even to their lives. In such times the apostles wrote, and in similar times, the language was introduced, which has led incautious persons too frequently to confound water, the mere "outward sign, with the inward spiritual grace" of regeneration in baptism; or at least mistakenly to suppose that the latter invariably and necessarily accompanies the former, which is one of the wildest conceits that ever entered the cogitations of a rational creature.

The learned and pious prelate, already referred to, as well as Dr. Pusey and the supporters of his unchristian system, are precisely of the same opinion. Though believing that Jesus is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, "is not, they say, regeneration; yet it was then an almost infallible test of it; and to persuade men through grace, to believe that Jesus was the Christ, was to prevail upon them to be truly and really converted." It was seldom seen among those primitive Christians, where there were no carnal re-

* Rev. xii. 11.

spects, nor outward advantages that could commend the gospel to the secular interests of men, when the only reward of professing Christ was reproaches, persecution, and martyrdom; seldom was it seen that any were won over from heathenism, or Judaism, to make profession of the name of Christ, but such as were inwardly renewed by that almighty grace, that can conquer all the despites and affronts of the world; few were so foolish as to profess Christ in hypocrisy, when that hypocrisy would be sure to endanger their lives; and yet, because it was but in hypocrisy, it could gain them no benefit by his death. Therefore it was that the scripture speaks of those that made a profession of the name of Christ, as if they were regenerated, because it was then an almost infallible mark of it."

But now, when the very name of a Christian is become a title of honour, and the same punishments do not now attend the denying of Christ, that then attended the acknowledgment of him, men may indeed be called by his name, that never were effectually called by his grace, and may make a profession of the true faith, and yet remain Christian infidels.*

The same principle was adopted by our Reformers in framing the articles, catechism, baptismal, and other services of the Church of England.

As it respects the articles, it is natural to expect, from these fundamental and studied expositions of

* Bishop Hopkins' Works, Vol. II. p. 471.

faith, the most exact information concerning the doctrines of the Church; and by them also it would appear reasonable to interpret anything, which might be thought doubtful in her more popular compositions. And we have no less than six articles bearing directly or indirectly upon the question in dispute, in each of which the strongest expressions are used to limit the spiritual benefits of both sacraments to the proper recipients thereof. In such only as "rightly, worthily, and by faith receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation, but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves damnation," as St. Paul saith.* The language of the Church communion-service is in perfect accordance with that of the articles referred to. "As the benefit is great, if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy sacrament, (for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood: then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us;) so is the danger great if we receive the same unworthily. For then we are guilty of the body and blood of Christ our Saviour; we eat and drink our own damnation, not considering the Lord's body," &c.

The catechism denies the necessary efficacy of the sacraments, by teaching, that "by the faithful alone are the body and blood of Christ (or the spiritual blessings represented by them) verily and

* 1 Cor. xi. 29.

indeed taken and received in the Lord's Supper:" and " that repentance and faith" are required in those who come either to that, or to the sacrament of baptism; yea, and they are directed, " to examine themselves, in order to ascertain whether they possess the requisite qualifications or not. With what shadow of reason, then, can any one affirm, that the catechism countenances, and much more, that it 'unequivocally asserts' the doctrine of a spiritual grace, as always accompanying the outward administration of the sacraments?

The Church, in her baptismal offices, speaks of persons whom she has baptized, as regenerate. But she proceeds in doing this, as in all her other services, on hypothetical and professional grounds exclusively; she acts in the important affair upon a footing of " charity, which hopeth all things;" yet she does not intend to nullify all her other restrictive declarations," by concluding that every one, who receives the outward sign, receives, as a thing of course, as an inseparable adjunct, " the inward and spiritual grace." Far from her be such self-contradiction and absurdity. " Irresistible, and overpowering indeed, and incapable of receiving any other explication, must be the evidence which should drive us to such a conclusion."

What then in reality is the case? It appears to admit of an easy and satisfactory explanation, which the Church herself has given us. Let it be observed, that before she thus speaks of her members as regenerate characters, and born again, not

only has she repeatedly prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit, and be born again, as for a blessing essentially necessary to salvation, even where baptism "is rightly administered;" but she has commanded, that they be "examined and found fit," previously to their admission to the sacred ordinance; she has admonished them of the necessity of "faithfully promising" things which no man, who is not a partaker of "repentance and faith," does or can "faithfully promise" or perform; and she has received their solemn vows and professions accordingly. Not till all this has taken place, in the case of infants, through the medium of their sponsors, and in the case of adults, by their own voluntary act, does she speak of the persons baptized, as "born again, and made heirs of everlasting salvation."

And who that entertains even the strictest views of regeneration as a spiritual change of heart, turning men from sin to holiness, and from the power of Satan to God, would hesitate to avow a charitable hope, that such persons have passed from death unto life, on the supposition that they have been sincere in the prayers which they have offered, and the solemn vows which they have made before God, the Church, and the whole world? But if, on the other hand, all these awful forms have been gone through without any real devotion, any sincerity (as we have too much reason to conclude they often have) for the sake of worldly advantage, as in the case of Simon Magus and others, who would be so presumptuous as to pronounce, that

in such cases any regeneration, any spiritual grace, accompanied, what was on the part of the receivers, at least a profane and impious mummery? And if no such supernatural effects followed baptism in such cases, by parity of reason, we have a right to infer, that no spiritual grace accompanies it, in the administration of the Lord's Supper, or other services, where, although there may be less impiety, there may be no more sincerity or real devotion. I contend then most seriously and strenuously, that the ground on which the Church speaks of those, whom she has baptized, as regenerate, is neither more nor less than the supposition—the assumption of their sincerity in their profession, as may be unanswerably proved by an appeal to the restrictive and cautionary language in which her articles and services are couched.

To assert then, the unfailing and necessary efficacy of the Sacraments, is nothing less than a republication of the old Popish doctrine of the '*opus operatum*,' which asserts, (in despite of all proofs to the contrary) that the benefits of the Sacraments are conveyed by the mere reception of them, independently of the state of mind of the persons who receive them: a foolish conceit this, which is repudiated by every orthodox Protestant, by every sober interpreter of sacred writ. But let us hear the decision of the Church and of the Reformers generally respecting this Papistical fiction, as given by Bishop Burnet. 'This,' he says, we 'reckon a doctrine that is not only without all foundation

in Scripture, but that tends to destroy all real religion, and to make men live on securely in sin, under the idea, "that the sacraments may be given them (efficaciously) when they die." The conditions of the new covenant are repentance, and faith, and obedience; and we look on this (notion) as corrupting the vitals of true religion, when any such means are proposed, by which the main design of the Gospel is quite overthrown. We look on all sacramental actions as acceptable to God only with regard to the temper, and the inward acts of the person to whom they are applied; and cannot consider them as medicines or charms, which work, by any virtue of their own, whether the person to whom they are applied co-operates with them or not. Thus we reject, not without great zeal, against the fatal effects of this error, all that is said (either by Catholics, or those who have imbibed their pernicious errors) of the '*opus operatum*,' the very doing of the sacrament: we think it looks (more like) the incantations of heathenism, than the purity and simplicity of the christian religion. *

Having, then, as Christian Protestants, renounced the errors, idolatry, and debasing superstitions of Rome, shall we go back, as some heterodox members of our church would advise us to do to 'the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth,' to ascertain the meaning of scripture, or to learn the proper use and nature of the sacra-

* Burnet on Art. xxv. p. 358, 359.

ments? God forbid, the soul-destroying infatuation! God forbid, that such awful blindness should ever again judicially afflict the English or any other Protestant Church? As therefore the use of the strong language employed in the office of baptism, has given rise to endless controversies and gross delusions, on a subject of vital importance, it would seem to be sound policy and true wisdom, to make such alterations therein as the exigency of the case imperiously demands.

Without this; what shall we continue to see, but the sad spectacle of a divided Church, one part of its ministers (a very small proportion we hope) entertaining lofty notions unfounded in scripture and reason, concerning the virtue of the sacraments; and the other following the light of scripture, and the doctrines of the Church of England, limiting their efficacy to "those who rightly, and by faith, receive the same?" And who can contemplate, without grief and dismay, the effects which such a diversity of sentiment must produce and perpetuate in the nation, when it beholds its accredited teachers opposed to each other, in hostile array, upon cardinal points, affecting the temporal and everlasting welfare of those who compose it. When these things are more fully considered, I shall indulge a charitable hope, that our hierarchy will gladly avail itself of the first opportunity, of terminating a dissension, which must, if much longer continued, lead to the most disastrous consequences, both in Church and State.

The amendments I have to propose would com-

pose these differences, and promote a real harmony of feeling amongst the ministers of the establishment; as well as the interests of our Redeemer's kingdom throughout the land. We should then realize the scene which it was the object of St. Paul's address to the Ephesians to produce; "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all;" each member of Christ's mystical body, "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, would walk worthy of the sacred vocation wherewith he is called."*

I begin with 'the ministration of Public Baptism of Infants,' in which I have to suggest the expunging of the declaration of the priest, after the performance of the divine rite, and alterations in some of the members of the sentence of another prayer.

The declaratory sentence to which I allude, thus expresses itself; 'Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerated and grafted into the body of Christ's church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits; and with one accord make our prayers unto him, that this child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning.'†

* Eph. iv. 3—6.

† I most fully coincide with the declaration made in the Rubrick for the public baptism of Infants: 'It is certain by God's word, that children which are baptised, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved.' The sentiment is full of pious consolation to bereaved parents. Matt. xix. 14.

This is a species of gratuitous assumption which rests entirely upon the supposed sincerity of the contracting parties. Whether the sponsors were sincere on their part, or God vouchsafed the blessing professed to be sought after by them, is known only to himself, "who searcheth all hearts." If the prayers previously offered to the Most High were presented in devotional sincerity, with a just appreciation and desire of his heavenly grace, then we may safely express a hope of the child's regeneration; but if not, it should not be a matter of surprize if instead of a blessing, the parties were "sent empty away." We may learn from the current of Holy Writ, that this is God's ordinary mode of dispensing the benefits of salvation to his fallen creatures; the grant of which is suspended, first upon a consciousness of their need of his mercy; and secondly, upon their diligence and sincerity in seeking them. Thus he avouches his readiness to "give a new heart, and a new spirit" to the Jews, on condition that they would testify such a deep sense of the value of these gospel blessings, as to pray ardently for them: "Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them."*

It would be wiser, then, to omit the declaration, 'that this child is regenerate, and grafted into Christ's church,' until it is arrived at a sufficient age to afford us assurance of a fact, which cannot

* Ezekiel xxxvi. 37.

be ascertained at the time, and must be subsequently proved by the existence and exercise of those gracious dispositions which constitute "the new birth unto righteousness."

The same objection may be urged against the following prayer, the declaratory terms of which would be more agreeable to scripture if used in an hypothetical sense. 'We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption and to incorporate him into thy holy church. And humbly we beseech thee to grant, that he, being dead to sin, and living unto righteousness, and being buried with Christ in his death, may crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin; and that, as he is made partaker of the death of thy Son, he may also be partaker of his resurrection; so that finally, with the residue of thy holy church, he may be an inheritor of thine everlasting kingdom; through our Lord Jesus Christ.'*

Can all this be safely affirmed of an infant, who is totally unconscious of the nature and design of the rite to which it has submitted, and incapable of performing the requisite conditions, namely, 'repentance and faith,' declared to be essential to the obtainment of spiritual blessings? Do men derive any benefit from participating of the Lord's Supper, or from the faithful preaching

* Baptismal Service.

of the everlasting Gospel, if they approach the former with an impenitent and unbelieving heart, or hear the latter unconcernedly, without "mixing faith with what they hear?" *

And can a babe, whose sponsors may have been faithless and insincere in the vows and professions made in its behalf at baptism, reap any profit from a service in which its representatives acted irreverently and hypocritically? It is true that God as the sovereign dispenser of all good things, may in some cases bestow his benediction upon baptized infants without any regard to the state of those who bring them to the font; yet in all such cases, their future piety and holiness must decide the point. It would therefore be more consistent with scripture, and analogous to God's general method of dealing with his creatures, under an economy of grace, to pray for the bestowment of his grace upon our children in baptism, rather than unwarrantably to assume as a fact, what after all may fairly be a subject of doubt and disputation.

The prayer might advantageously be thus used: 'We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to admit this infant by baptism into Christ's visible Church; mercifully receive him for thine own child by adoption and grace; and humbly we beseech thee to grant, that he may become dead to sin, and live unto righteousness; may be buried with Christ in his death, crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the

* Heb. iv. 2.

whole body of sin; that he may be made partaker of the death of thy Son, and also of his resurrection; so that finally with the residue of thy holy Church, he may be an inheritor of thy everlasting kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'

'The ministration of private baptism of children in houses,' adopts the same petitions and makes the same avowal of the infants' regeneration, as that which we have been reviewing; and therefore requires similar treatment to make it unexceptionable to great multitudes of the laity, and to several thousands of the clergy, who can only adopt the language of those services hypothetically, upon the supposition in the case of infants, of their possessing that holy disposition, which shall lead them, when they become capable of it, to keep their baptismal vows.

In the exhortation upon the words of the Gospel, beginning with the words, 'Beloved, ye hear in this Gospel,' &c. instead of the words, 'Doubt ye not therefore, but earnestly believe, that he hath likewise favourably received this present infant; that he hath embraced him with the arms of his mercy; and (as he hath promised in his holy word) will give him the blessing of eternal life, and make him partaker of his everlasting kingdom.' The whole sentence should be turned into a supplication after the following manner: 'Let us earnestly pray therefore that he will likewise favourably receive this present infant; that he will embrace him with the arms of his mercy; and,

(as he hath promised in his holy word) will give unto him the blessing of eternal life, and make him a partaker of his heavenly kingdom.' The sentence which follows the preceding one may be entirely expunged.

The prayer 'Almighty and everlasting God' will admit of a similar improvement. Instead of the words, in the second sentence, 'that he, being born again, and being made an heir of everlasting salvation,' it would be better to pray that he may be born again and be made an heir of salvation, &c.

'The ministration of baptism to such as are of riper years, and able to answer for themselves,' is also constructed upon the same hypothetical principle as those services we have just been considering. It charitably hopes, after the solemn confessions of the candidate, and the prayers of the minister and sponsors, in which he joins, that the regenerating grace of the Spirit, which has been implored, is actually vouchsafed, to renew his heart in righteousness and true holiness. Whether, however, this charitable assumption is true or not, remains to be proved by the subsequent conduct of the parties who have presented themselves to the Church upon this interesting occasion. That in some instances there has been what St. Peter calls "the answer of a good conscience toward God," * is evident by the fruits which follow, and here unquestionably the in-

* 1 Pet. iii. 21.

valuable blessing of renewing and sanctifying grace has been conferred; but that it has been withheld from them that have not sincerely engaged in the solemn rite, is manifest beyond all controversy, by their unholy and irreligious spirit and conduct.

I would respectfully suggest here also, that the avowal of the candidate's regeneration should be omitted altogether in the declaration, 'seeing now, dearly beloved,' &c. also that the expression, 'being now born again, and made heirs of salvation,' in the prayer, 'we yield thee hearty thanks, O heavenly Father,' &c. be erased and supplied by the following words, to render it more consonant with the alteration proposed in the public and private offices of baptism; 'Give thy Holy Spirit to these persons; that they may be born again, and made heirs of everlasting salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

And then, finally, in the address 'to the newly baptized persons,' in lieu of the words, 'and as for you, who have now by baptism put on Christ, it is your part and duty also, being made the children of God and of the light by faith in Christ Jesus;' I would substitute for them this petition; 'and as for you who have now professedly by baptism put on Christ, it is your part and duty earnestly to pray that ye may become the children of God, and of the light, by faith in Jesus Christ, and thus walk answerably to your Christian calling, as becometh the children of light.'

The most cogent and irresistible reasons may be offered to shew the propriety, expediency, and utility of the verbal amendments which have been humbly suggested.

First; the great danger which must ever arise, from drawing positive conclusions from hypothetical premises, is imminently great. Should that which is barely possible, be assumed as always infallibly certain? Every sound logician would fearlessly answer the proposition in the negative. It has I think, been satisfactorily proved, that the Church never arrives at the conclusion, before she has adduced the reasons on which it is founded. And should we in one of the most solemn transactions between God and our souls, hastily infer (as the Jews unwarrantably and to their ruin did of old) that we have received a "blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of our salvation," before we have taken suitable means to scrutinize our hearts, to ascertain whether our professions are unequivocally sincere? Such an assumption may be true or otherwise, as we have demonstrably shewn. In too many instances, alas, the insincerity and hypocrisy of the pretension to integrity, has been falsified by experience and matter of fact; and shall we tell men, under such circumstances, that their regeneration is morally certain, and cannot admit of the least doubt? What is this but to practice on them one of the most awful delusions,—a deception that may rob them of glory, and honour, and immortality, and eternal life? What is this, I confidently ask, but

to thrust men violently into the arms of Apollyon the destroyer, instead of bringing them to Christ, that they may be saved, and "justified by faith in his blood?" To rob me of my character by the breath of calumny, to kill my body by poison or improper medicaments, is an evil comparatively trifling, to that spurious and unscriptural charity, which may (if the mercy of God interpose not to prevent it,) procure the everlasting destruction of my soul. What is this but to incur the guilt and condemnation of the lying prophets, whom God denounced; "Because, even because they seduced his people, saying peace, and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and lo others daubed it with untempered mortar. Say unto them that daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones shall fall, and a stormy wind shall rend it. Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it? Wherefore thus saith the Lord God; behold I am against you, because with lies ye have made the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad, and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life."* Would it not then argue more zeal for the honour of God, and more compassionate concern for men's spiritual welfare, to comfort those only who give Christian evidence of the new birth unto righteousness, and to exhort

* Ezekiel xiii. 10—23.

them that in spite of their baptismal vows are "living without hope and God in the world," to "repent and believe the Gospel," lest their hypocrisy in coming to the holy ordinance, should insure their final condemnation. Such a necessary discrimination of character, is repeatedly urged on the ministers of Christ. They are solemnly commanded to "take forth the precious from the vile," that the former may be "gathered as wheat into the heavenly garner, but the latter, if they die in their impenitence, may be burnt up as chaff, with unquenchable fire." *

I would recommend the adoption of the suggested alterations, as terms of peace and conciliation with those who have long been offended with the too gratuitous language of our rituals. Millions of conscientious persons cannot be brought to attach any other meaning to the assumptions I have mentioned, but a low and qualified one, not taking for granted what it asserts, for fear of lulling men into a fatal repose. They love the church from the bottom of their hearts, and would gladly hold communion with her, if these obstacles to unity of sentiment were removed. Is it not highly expedient and desirable, when the maxim of Satan and his emissaries, in their hostility to the establishment, is 'divide et impera,' to make such trifling concessions, where indispensably necessary, as would unite all Christian minds, in espousing truth; and in combating, as a mighty

* Matt. iii. 12.

phalanx, the errors of the enemies of the living God? Immense multitudes who would earnestly contend for the doctrines of the Church of England, as exhibited in her articles and homilies, stand aloof from connexion with her, because they conceive that she affirms in her formularies of faith, what she denies or explains away in her ritual administrations. To obviate what they perhaps rightly think an apparent inconsistency, replete with danger to men's eternal welfare, let us remove every "stumbling-block out of the way of our weaker brethren, lest we cause them to offend." * In imitation of the blessed Apostle St. Paul, who sought in nonessential matters to blend the most discordant elements into harmony and peace, let us act upon this declaration,—"For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more." So long as we "hold fast faith and a good conscience," † we may allowedly do as St. Paul did,—"Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law. To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without the law. To them that are weak, became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do

* 1 Cor. viii. 1—13. † 1 Tim. i. 19.

for the Gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you." *

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." †

* 1 Cor. ix. 18—24. † Matt. v. 9.

CHAPTER XV.

THE HYPOTHETICAL PRINCIPLE AS IT REGARDS CHARACTER AND PRIVILEGE, PERVADES THE CATECHISMAL AND THE CONFIRMATION, THE VISITATION OF THE SICK, AND THE BURIAL SERVICES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND—ALTERATIONS SUGGESTED.

'SINCE children in their baptism, engage to renounce the devil and all his works, to believe in God and serve him, it is fit that they be taught, so soon as they are able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession, they have made.' Accordingly after the offices appointed for baptism, follows a catechism, that is to say, 'an instruction to be learned of every person, before he be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed.'

'The catechism is drawn up after the primitive manner by way of question and answer. Thus Philip catechized the eunuch.*

As to the contents of the Church Catechism, it is not a large system or body of divinity, to puzzle the heads of young beginners; but only a short and full explication of the baptismal vow. In the opinion of the best judges, it excels all catechisms that ever were in the world; being so short, that the youngest children may learn it by heart; and

* Deut. vi. 7; xxxi. 11, 12. Acts viii. 37.

yet so full and comprehensive that it contains all things necessary to be known in order to salvation.'*

There is one sentence in it however, which forms an exception to this just commendation. I mean the words used as an answer to the second question, 'Who gave you this name?' 'My Godfathers and Godmothers in my baptism; wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.' We maintain that the catechism is composed upon the same principle as the other services of the Church. In it children are taught to speak of themselves, as in baptism. In profession indeed, and as Hooker's language is, 'in the eye of the Church,' they were made such,† but if the words are to be taken in a higher and more spiritual sense, then, it must be clearly proved, that subsequently to their baptism they have in reality shewn themselves to be indeed "dead unto sin, and born anew unto righteousness." And accordingly it is to be observed, that the same catechumens who are directed to use the above language, also individually answer the following question: 'Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe and do as thy godfathers and godmothers promised for thee in thy baptism? Yes, verily, and by God's help so I will; and I heartily thank our heavenly Father, that he hath called me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; and I pray unto God to give

* Wheatley on the Common Prayer. See Article on the Catechism.

† Hooker, Book V. c. 60, p. 248.

me his grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life's end." And again, afterwards they profess faith in "God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth them and all the elect people of God."

Here the things supposed are explicitly enough avowed. Now, whatever catechumen has from the moment of his baptism, possessed the dispositions contained in that answer, which those things strongly imply, has undoubtedly become regenerate, and attained the exalted privileges specified therein. But he who will undertake to affirm, that the very act of baptism necessarily makes a child such, evidently draws from a few misinterpreted expressions, conclusions alike opposed to scripture, to the doctrines of the Church of England, the primitive Fathers, our venerable Reformers, the best divines, yea to sound reason and experience. For is it not a matter of fact, of which any one may assure himself, that countless thousands of children who are taught to make that avowal, prove by their spirit, temper, and general demeanour, that they are not spiritual "members of Christ," but alienated from his service; are not actually in a proper sense "the children of God;" but of Satan the wicked one, whom they imitate; and not "inheritors of the kingdom of heaven;" being destitute of humility for sin, faith, love, righteousness, and all those dispositions of soul, which qualify them for admission into, and the enjoyment of his celestial kingdom of glory. Will any one say, this is an extremely uncharitable assertion? Is it not discouraging to those, who

wish to learn and repeat the catechism? I answer, the language used in reply to that question, carries our charitable hope and supposition to an unjustifiable extent. It would be infinitely wiser in my judgment to examine the children beforehand with a view to ascertain whether they can conscientiously make such an avowal, or put such hypothetical language in their mouths, as would enable them to return an answer more consistent with truth and integrity. Even Christians, who are in an advanced state of knowledge and holiness; conscious of the manifold defects and imperfections which attach to their best performances, and feeling acutely "the plague of their own hearts" * are afraid to lay the flattering unction of Pharisaic complacency to their souls; lest they should deceive themselves with regard to their religious state, and "come short of the rest which remaineth for the people of God."† With what caution and sobriety, then, should youth speak of themselves with reference to their justification and acceptance with him, "who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men!"‡ Should not modesty, and diffidence, and humility, characterize their declarations? If St. Paul, "a chosen vessel of Christ," abounding with divine gifts and graces, saw it expedient "to keep under his body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when he had preached to others, he himself should be a cast away;"§ does it behove

* 1 Kings viii. 38. † Heb. iv. 1–9. ‡ Jer. xx. 12.
§ 1 Cor. ix. 27.

noviciates in religious knowledge to speak confidently of their state before that God, who can easily detect the least appearance of evil? If Isaiah, when he saw the glory and the perfection of the Deity, exclaimed, "woe is me? for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips;"* what petition can we suggest more suitable for youth, who are "by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath," than that of David, "create in me, O God, a clean heart; and renew a right spirit within me."†

I am quite convinced that a large body of the clergy and their congregations, together with all those who differ from us on some minor points, seriously object to the use of that language, as too arrogant and assuming, where the spiritual condition of the catechumens is a matter of great doubt and uncertainty. And I know it is the custom, in many instances, for the children of dissenting parents, either to absent themselves entirely, or to excuse themselves from repeating the catechism, on those days, when it is appointed to be said in our public schools. The assumption of such exalted privileges is, generally speaking, ridiculous and presumptuous in their eyes, and calculated to lead those who make them into the most dangerous delusion, and the greatest recklessness and impiety of life.

To entertain a charitable hope of the salvation of those persons who give full proof of "a work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in

* Isaiah vi. 5, 6. † Psalm li. 10.

our Lord Jesus Christ," * is perfectly admissible on scriptural grounds; but to flatter young persons, whose religious state may reasonably admit of disputation, with being amongst "the elect people of God," simply because they have been baptized, according to the rites of our Church, is indeed a subject of painful consideration; because it may be the way to fill them with spiritual pride, and to set up an insurmountable barrier to their endeavours to "grow in grace, and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," whereby alone they can "make their calling and election sure."† In the time of the apostles, the mere profession of christianity subjected men to loss of life and property. At such a juncture, it was reasonable enough to believe, that all who offered themselves for baptism, were previously regenerated by the Holy Ghost. And this affords a most easy account of the means by which that strong language, which has been so long in use, has been introduced into the Church. "It is the way of the scriptures to speak to, and of the visible members of the Church of Christ, under such appellations and expressions as may seem at first hearing to imply, that they are all of them truly righteous and holy persons. The reason of which is, that they were visibly, by obligation and by profession, all this; which was thus represented to them, the more effectually to stir them up and engage them to live according to their profession and obligation."‡

* 1 Thess. i. 3. † 2 Pet. i. 10, 11.

† Bishop Bradford on Baptismal and Spiritual Regeneration.

I would venture to suggest then, the necessity of expunging the words, "made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven;" and substituting for them, "wherein I was brought into Christ's visible Church, and taught to pray for grace, that I might become Christ's faithful soldier and servant, and fight manfully under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil, unto the end of my life."* Here is an alteration, which, whilst it does not ensnare the conscience, is, at the same time, adapted to excite the catechumen to the utmost diligence, "in working out his salvation with fear and trembling;" with an expectation that "God of his infinite mercy will work in him both to will and to do of his own good pleasure."†

2. It was customary amongst the Jews to bring their children, at the age of thirteen years, to be publicly examined before the congregation, and to make a solemn promise that they would, from thenceforward, engage themselves faithfully to observe the law of Moses. After this, followed the prayers of the congregation, that God would bless and enable them to make good their promise. And from this custom of the Jews, the rite of Confirmation is thought by some to have been deduced.‡

Thus the children of the Jews were incorporated into the visible Church of God by circumcision, just as the children of christian parents are by

* Baptismal Service. † Phil. ii. 3.

‡ Wheatley on Confirmation, p. 386, 387.

baptism. Our blessed Saviour shewed great condescension and kindness in taking the little children presented to him in his arms, "putting his hands upon them, and blessing them."* How exquisitely beautiful is this instance of Christ's loving kindness to young people! Striking, indeed, one would believe, must have been the effect of this transaction upon the parties concerned in it. What an obligation must it have fixed upon the parents to train up their children to the service of Jesus their Lord, who had so graciously received them! What a powerful plea must it have furnished the young persons themselves with, when come to years of discretion, to evince increased attachment, to him, to whom they had been thus devoted in their infancy.

A rite, similar in all its leading features to confirmation, as used in the Church at the present day, obtained among the apostles. "As soon as they heard that the Samaritans had been converted and baptized by Philip, they sent two of their number, Peter and John to lay their "hands on them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost, a plain and convincing argument that neither baptism alone, nor the person that administered it was able to convey the Holy Ghost; and that imposition of hands was necessary to strengthen the faith, and complete the knowledge of those christian converts after they had received baptism."†

The rite of confirmation has been practised by

* Matt. xix. 13—16. † Wheatley on the Common Prayer.

the Church of Christ in all ages. And the ancient Fathers esteemed it so essential a part of the catechumen's duty, that they conceived none, who were advanced to years of discretion, could safely neglect it, without incurring great danger to their souls. Unquestionably then it is a duty incumbent on ministers and parents to prepare children at a suitable age for the due observance of this solemn engagement; and it is strongly binding on young people who have entered into covenant with God at baptism, to "renew the solemn promise and vow then made in their name; ratifying and confirming the same in their own persons, and acknowledging themselves bound to believe and do all those things which their godfathers and godmothers undertook for them." And what was the nature and obligation of those stipulations which the catechumen made in baptism by his sponsors, when covenanting with the most high God? He returns an answer in the following words: "they did promise and vow three things in my name. First, that I should renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. Secondly, that I should believe in all the articles of the Christian faith, and thirdly, that I should keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life."*

Here is a contract so solemn and obligatory, that any finite being may well tremble under a sense of its responsibility. It stipulates for the

* Catechism.

renunciation of Satan and his disgraceful yoke, the delusory and polluting charms of this wicked world and the lusts of the flesh; the unshaken credence of all the doctrines of the christian religion, and, lastly, such a sincere dedication of ourselves both in body and soul to the holy service of God, as shall prove that we prefer his favour to everything else.

Well may it be asked, who is sufficient for these things? The least understanding of the frailty and depravity of our nature will teach us to respond, with regard to ourselves, "our sufficiency to perform our vows is only of the Lord," who giveth strength and power to his people "to accomplish those things which he would have them to do."*

The Church, aware of the impotency of the catechumen to do good without divine assistance, first questions him to this effect: "dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe, and to do, as they have promised for thee?" and then instructs him to answer, "yes, verily; and by God's help so I will. And I heartily thank our heavenly Father, that he hath called me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. And I pray unto God, that he would give me his grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life's end."

Where this stipulation is faithfully observed, and the conditions of the covenant strictly fulfilled, what inestimable benefits result therefrom! The

* Collect for First Sunday after Epiphany.

candidates will remember the solemn transaction through life with the greatest satisfaction, pardon of sin will be vouchsafed, faith will be increased, and there is a reasonable hope that they will "go from strength to strength, until they appear before the God of Gods in Zion."* Thus they, who wait upon the Lord, shall renew their (spiritual) strength; they shall mount up with wings as as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not be faint."† But if their "avouching the Lord to be their God," is made ignorantly, inconsiderately, and insincerely, and consequently their vows remain unfulfilled; then the effect of such faithlessness must be to bring down upon themselves a curse, and not a blessing: and, unless deep repentance prevent, the remembrance of such unholy trifling and prevarication will prove a never-dying worm of remorse, corroding their consciences with unavailing anguish for ever. Let the young be deeply impressed with the enormity of entering upon this most important affair, as too many, alas, do, in a spirit of profane levity. Dread to make the season of confirmation, a day of frivolity, and much more a day of disorder, of riot, and wantonness. Pray earnestly to God, that he would impress a devout seriousness on your minds, not only during the time of preparing for it, but especially on the day, when the rite is celebrated.

The covenant being entered into, and a profes-

* Psalm lxxxiv. 7. † Isaiah xl. 29—31.

sion of sincerity made before God, the Church, and the whole world, the Bishop in that hope and persuasion, addresses heaven in behalf of the candidates, as "being regenerated by water and the Holy Ghost, and as having all their sins forgiven them:" how anxious should they be to let their whole lives testify, that the Church did not flatter herself with vain expectations, when she indulged this charitable supposition respecting them. Then their blessedness will indeed be superlatively great whilst they live, and when death shall arrive, they will be admitted into "the presence of God, where is fulness of joy, and to his right hand, where are pleasures evermore." * Finally, the Bishop, one of the principal ministers of Christ's Church, having invoked the strength of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and the manifold gifts of divine grace, imposes his hands on the head of each young person to be confirmed, and commends them with supplication to God, that they may so live here, as to obtain everlasting life hereafter.

Delightful would be the thought, if we could be warranted to entertain it, that all who offer themselves for confirmation, had been "renewed in the spirit of their minds," previous to their entrance on its solemn engagements. But I suppose the most strenuous supporters of the rite, from their own observations of the state, character, and conduct, of the generality of the candidates for confirmation both antecedently and subse-

* Psalm xvi. 11.

quently, to the serious act, would hardly feel themselves justified in avowing their belief of it. For this reason we have the same ground for objecting to the gratuitous assumption of each youth's "regeneration, and forgiveness of sins," that we had to the use of similar terms at baptism, and in the catechismal service of the Church.

As humility for sin is a prominent grace of the new birth, and is inculcated in the most striking manner, both by Christ and St. James; who to impress its importance, as a qualification for heaven, solemnly reiterate, to every soul of man, "whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and whosoever humbleth himself shall be exalted;" * we hesitate not to affirm that it would be far more agreeable to Scripture, and much more beneficial to the spiritual health and happiness of every child coming to baptism, the catechism, and confirmation, not to take for granted, as a matter of moral certainty, that "they are born again of the Holy Ghost, made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven," but rather to pray ardently, that they may become partakers of those inestimable blessings, which God only can communicate, and will impart to them that feel the necessity of them, and ask for them faithfully in his Son's name.†

To illustrate my meaning by a reference to a usage prevailing in municipal towns:—Under the charters of corporate towns, numerous persons

* Luke xviii. 14. † Ibid. xi 13.

are free-born: but unless when come to maturity, they take up their freedom legally, they can enjoy no benefit of this privilege. So infants, at baptism, are admitted to outward communion and connection with the Church, as well as candidates for confirmation, by the renewal of the covenant, then made by others in their behalf: but unless the former received "the inward and spiritual grace, as well as the outward and visible sign," to be evidenced when they grow up, by the performance of their vows; namely, a renunciation of "the world, the flesh, and the devil," a believing in Christ, and walking in the commandments of God: and the latter by contracting solemnly with God in penitence and faith, and a hearty desire to devote themselves unreservedly to his service, they derive no saving advantages whatever from these divine ordinances. They do not sue out, in municipal language, their privileges; and consequently forfeit them.

It would be safer then to expunge the expression, "to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins," and insert in lieu of them, "to admit these thy servants to the privilege of communion with Christ's Church, and the benefits which she dispenses to the faithful, strengthen them," &c.

3. "That the holy state of matrimony was instituted by God in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church," is evident from the

two first chapters of the Bible; * whence it came to pass, that amongst all the descendants from our first parents, and the numerous inhabitants of the different nations of the world, there has been some religious way of entering into this state, in consequence and testimony of this divine institution. Among Christians especially, from the very first ages of the Church, those that have been married have been always joined together in a solemn manner, by an ecclesiastical person. And by several canons of our own Church it is declared to be no less than prostituting one's daughter, to give her in marriage, without the blessing of the priest. It is certain that both in the Greek and Latin churches, offices were drawn up in the most early times for the religious celebration of this holy ordinance; but being afterwards mixed with superstitious rites, our Reformers thought fit to lay them aside, and to draw up a form more decent and grave, and more agreeable to the usage of the primitive Church." †

There is however one expression in the act of wedding, which I believe might be altogether omitted without the least detriment to the service; I allude to the words, "with my body I thee worship." Every one moderately versed in the knowledge of language, is at no loss to understand the meaning of the term "worship," as signifying honour; but the bulk of those who celebrate this divine rite, are illiterate persons, who shew by

* Gen. ii. 20, 25. † Wheatley on the Common Prayer in loco.

their very gestures and smiles, that they attach a meaning to the obnoxious word, which the Church does not intend to convey. It were devoutly to be wished, for the sake of obviating the misapprehensions of the ignorant, and for the sake of preserving that decorum which should pervade the whole of this momentous transaction, that the phrase should be absolutely expunged.

4. The "order for the visitation of the sick," contains a form of absolution, which has caused not a little perplexity and difficulty to some ministers and many other persons. The words themselves are sufficiently obscure to elicit their real meaning. "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his Church, to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences: and by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." * This formulary might give rise to many questions, some of which I shall briefly advert to hereafter. But can any one doubt upon what ground the absolution pronounced in it by the minister proceeds? Can any one imagine, that it is declared absolutely, without any thing supposed as to the state of mind of the absolved? The very words of the preamble would repel such an imagination, for they speak only of a power to absolve sinners "truly repenting and believing in Christ." And what minister of Christ would

* Order for the visitation of the sick.

either fear or object to pronounce in the name and by the authority of God, remission of sins to such characters? Does not God authorize the proceeding, when he directs his prophet, and of course all his faithful ambassadors, to say, in his stead, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." * Here then, as in the confirmation and other services, the key to the right understanding of the passage, is to be found in what precedes. This absolution is not to be pronounced till after the minister "has examined" the sick person, "whether he repent him truly of his sins, and be in charity with all the world:" not till he has "moved him to make a special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter."

"After which confession," it is directed, "the priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and heartily desire it) after this sort."

"Now whether the Church designs by this form, that the priest shall directly convey God's pardon to the conscience of a sinner for his sins and offences committed against him; or whether that he shall only remit the censures of the Church, and continue him in the privileges of communion with her, which he may be supposed to have forfeited by the sins he has confessed, is thought by

* Isa. lv. 7.

some, not to be clearly and determinately expressed. But if we look forward to the Collect immediately after to be used, it looks as if the Church did only intend the remission of ecclesiastical censures and bonds. For in that prayer the penitent is said still "most earnestly to desire pardon and forgiveness of sins:" which surely there would be no occasion to do, if he had been actually pardoned and forgiven of God, by virtue of the absolution pronounced before. Besides, the priest offers a special request, that God would "preserve and continue him in the unity of the Church;" which seems to suppose, that the foregoing absolution had been pronounced, in order to restore him to this peace. And, therefore, since the form will bear this sense, without straining or putting any force upon the words, it can be no offence to interpret them so, as is most consistent with the original commission given by the Lord, and the exercise of it in the purest ages of the Church."*

Now it is plain, that the authority first promised to St. Peter, and afterwards to all the apostles, was a power of admitting to, or excluding from Church communion. "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven;" or of the Christian church, under the gospel dispensation; "and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."† After his resurrection, Christ, in giving his final com-

* Wheatley on the order of Visitation for the Sick, p. 448—450.
† Matt. xvi. 19.

mission to his apostles, endued them with the same authority, expressed indeed in different words, but similar in purport and signification. "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." * 'It is plain that this commission as well as the former, confers only a power of excommunicating and absolving (those that are cut off from communion with the Church) and consequently that no authority can be urged from hence for the applying of God's pardon to the conscience of a sinner, or for absolving him any otherwise than from the censures of the Church.' †

In consequence of the sixty-seventh canon of the Church giving a licensed minister liberty to use this order, or any other, as he shall see convenient, the service has grown into a state of desuetude amongst the generality of the clergy. And it would tend effectually to stop the mouths of gain-sayers if so questionable a form of words were totally withdrawn—a form of words, which many, who are not well affected to the establishment, look upon as papistical in its origin and tendency.

5. 'The office for the burial of the dead is generally admired for its eloquence, and for the topics of consolation which it suggests to the sorrowing friends of those who have departed this life. It has however been objected to it, that it expresses too confident a hope of the salvation of

* John xx. 22, 23. † Wheatley in loco.

every individual, over whose remains the office is used.

An attempt has been made to relieve these difficulties, first, by saying, 'That the language employed proceeds upon the supposition, that the deceased was in reality, what he is understood to have been in profession, a sincere Christian;' Secondly, 'That the words describe the Christian hope generally, without special reference to the individual.' "We commit his body to the ground, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life." 'It is not said of his resurrection, but, generally, of the resurrection.' After the most mature consideration I can give the subject, I must be allowed to declare, that neither of these explanations are sufficient to remove the prejudices and dislike, which is universally prevalent against that part of the service. The language in the former instance confessedly carries the charitable hope to an unscriptural excess with regard to thousands, who rush into the arms of death by their own suicidal hands; or by intoxication and crimes; of whose deep repentance there was perhaps no satisfactory evidence afforded; and in the latter, it certainly does suppose that the deceased is amongst those real Christians who may expect a blessed resurrection. I am quite confident that the expressions in spite of every defence of them which has been resorted to, have produced a most injurious impression.

Every truly conscientious clergyman trembles at the utterance of such words, over those who

have violently deprived themselves of an existence, which God gave, and no man has a right to take away (except where it is forfeited to justice by a criminal offence) under any pretext whatever. Even in ordinary cases, where there was no scriptural proof of the piety and holiness of our departed neighbour, a minister of Christ must have his conscience severely taxed to express 'a sure and certain hope of his resurrection to eternal life;' but with what mental reservation, with what painful solicitude and embarrassment, must he pass so unwarranted a sentence upon persons, who have unbiddingly and unpreparedly plunged themselves into the presence of that God "who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity" with any degree of allowance.* In such cases, can he be expected to ratify the sentence of his servant? or approve of his conduct in wittingly "strengthening the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his way, by promising him life."† As compliance with the forms of the office is imperative in the present state of things, we trust, as in the case of Naaman the Syrian,‡ that the Lord who looketh at the heart, and knows the motives and intentions of his ministers, will pardon them in a transaction, in which they are legally forced to take a reluctant part.

But what effect must the obnoxious expressions produce upon those who witness the funeral rite, when they exercise their unprejudiced reason upon

* Habakkuk i. 13. † Jer. xxiii. 14. ‡ 2 Kings v. 18.

them? Will they not conclude that both the Church and her ministers feel too great a disregard for truth and righteousness, when with so little hesitation they can confidently pronounce on the future bliss of those, who, if they have committed those offences whilst in possession of their reason, and shown no compunction on account of them will be cited to appear at the bar of God, where every one will be dealt with according to his works. It is not to be wondered at, if many are emboldened to continue in sin, when they hear such words read over persons, who lived perhaps for a long time without the fear of God, and departed hence under his heavy displeasure. However the learned may choose to interpret the expressions, it is obvious that the generality of the lower orders are too apt to suppose that they necessarily apply to the case of every one indiscriminately, over whose remains they are used. In this way the too common delusion is fostered, that if a person has been placed in adverse circumstances in this life, he will assuredly be happy in the next at his decease, let his conduct have been ever so impious and disorderly. On all these accounts, it is highly expedient that the expressions should be changed for others, which would not compromise the consciences of ministers, or encourage fallacious hopes in impenitent sinners, whether dying or living; nor be offensive to God who judgeth righteously. An alteration might be made, such as follows: "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to remove the soul of the deceased out of this tran-

sitory life, we therefore commit his body to the grave, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; looking for the resurrection both of the just and the unjust, through our Lord Jesus Christ; who, at his final coming to judge the world in righteousness, will summon all men to appear before him, that they may receive the things done in their bodies, according to that which they have done, whether they be good or bad:" Here is a simple annunciation of a solemn truth recognized in scripture, which offers no insult either to the dead or to the living, affords no premium to vice and impiety, calls for no sacrifice of conscience in the officiating minister, and offers no affront to God, who will not be mocked with the adulatory compliments of men to each other.

Some amendment might be effected also in the prayer in which the minister says, "We give thee hearty thanks for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world." It may reasonably be asked, Do the feelings, the real sentiments of the mourning friends of the deceased correspond in a majority of instances with this expression of thankfulness to God? It is well indeed if they have brought not only their reason, but their affections, to a temper of meek resignation and submission to the divine will. A prayer for unfeigned acquiescence in the afflictive dispensation might be thus expressed; "We pray thee to give us a proper submission to thy holy will under the sorrowful bereavement, and prepare us for thy blessed abode in heaven; beseeching thee," &c.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON THE MORE EFFICIENT EXERCISE OF THE EPISCOPAL OFFICE—MORE FREQUENT PREACHING—ANNUAL VISITATIONS—CONSTANT RESIDENCE OF BISHOPS IN THEIR DIOCESES—HOLY LIFE AND SALUTARY EXAMPLE OF BISHOPS—ORDINATION OF PRIESTS—THE BISHOPS WITHDRAWING FROM PARLIAMENT—POLICY OF THEIR RETIRING FROM PARLIAMENT—SILENTLY RECORDED VOTE ON LEGISLATIVE MEASURES AFFECTING THE CHURCH.

"THAT the reformation was never completed in this kingdom is a fact which few will dispute." We are told so by Bishop Burnet, whose larger history of the reformation in England was honoured with the thanks of both Houses of Parliament, a distinction conferred, I believe, on no literary production either before or since. At the Savoy conference, almost immediately after the restoration, and shortly after the abdication of James the Second, and the accession of his daughter and her husband, attempts were made to remove some imperfections in our ecclesiastical institutions, and to supply or complete some things that were wanting. Much of what was then proposed might have been adopted with great benefit to the Church. But the spirit of the times was most unfavourable for the work; and the attempt at improvement was altogether abortive. Thus has the Church of England gone on from the commence-

ment of the reformation of religion, until the present time, a period of nearly three hundred years, acknowledging and lamenting her own incompleteness in some important particulars, but prevented by some extraneous circumstances from applying a remedy.

But surely such a remedy might be applied now. The circumstances and the temper of the present times seems to be singularly favourable for it. Never did public men seem more intent upon carrying into effect great measures of amelioration and improvement. They appear to be disposed to lay aside party and political feelings and prejudices, and contribute each what he can, to the great work of temperate and prudent reformation. And never perhaps did the bench of Bishops contain more men of distinguished talent and learning, united with simplicity and integrity of character, and a deep heartfelt anxiety for the advancement of real religion.

If the defects and imperfections which appear to me to exist in our ecclesiastical system, had been merely theoretical, unattended with any important practical consequences, I would not have hazarded the imputation of meddling officiousness and presumption, to which I am very sensible I now expose myself. But the imperfections to which I allude, operate, in my opinion, most widely and extensively, in diminishing in many cases the respectability and the efficiency of the parochial clergy, and in depriving our apostolical Church of much of that heartfelt and principled

attachment, to which in all essential matters, she is so justly entitled. Even if our ecclesiastical system had been in every thing perfect and complete at the time it was originally constituted, it still may be possible that after a lapse of two hundred and seventy years, some alterations may be expedient or even necessary. We have recently been reminded by two of the master spirits of the age, of the aphorism of Lord Bacon, 'that time is the greatest innovator, and that if laws and institutions do not keep pace with time, if they are not from time to time reviewed and renovated, they have a tendency to fall into contempt and desuetude.'

'Public opinion has at all times a right to be treated with respect; and in the present day is possessed of a legitimate weight and influence, which it never possessed at any former period. In consequence of the general diffusion of education, and of the influence of the public press, men who formerly were contented to take things as they found them, and to leave them so, are now disposed to inquire and discuss; to examine into the fitness of existing institutions, and the improvements of which they may be susceptible. I feel confident that public opinion will go with me in all the alterations which I shall venture to suggest. In compliance with the feelings of the times, a spirit of general improvement has gone forth and pervaded the whole of our systems of legislation. Surely the Church ought not to be the only body not benefitted by the intellectual progress of the age.

'I would only ask,' says Lord Bacon, 'why the civil state should be purged and restored by good and wholesome laws, made every third or fourth year in Parliament assembled, devising remedies as fast as time breedeth mischief; and contrariwise the ecclesiastical state should still continue upon the dregs of time, and receive no alterations now for these five and forty years and more. If it be said to me, that there is a difference between civil causes and ecclesiastical, they may as well tell me that churches and chapels need no reparations, though castles and houses do; whereas commonly, to speak truth, dilapidations of the inward spiritual edifications of the Church of God are in all times as great as the outward and material.'*

Again, in another place, 'To my lords the bishops I say, that it is hard for them to avoid blame (in the opinion of an indifferent person) in standing so precisely upon altering nothing; leges, novis legibus non recreata, acescunt. Qui mala non permutat, in bonis non perseverat.' To take away many abuses supplanteth not good orders, but establisheth them. Morosa moris retentio, res turbulenta est æque ac novitas. 'A good husbandman is ever pruning in his vineyard or his fields; not unreasonably indeed, not unskilfully, but lightly; he findeth ever somewhat to do.'† With all humility and deference, therefore, I do most seriously put it to the rulers and guardians of our Church, to consider the wisdom of a timely reform. Early refor-

* Bacon on the pacification of the Church.

† Bacon on Church controversies.

mations are amicable arrangements with a friend in power; late reformations are terms imposed upon a conquered enemy; early reformations are made in cool blood; late reformations are made under a state of inflammation. In that state of things the people behold in the establishment nothing that is respectable. They see the abuse, and they will see nothing else. They fall into the temper of a furious populace, provoked at the disorders of a house of ill-fame; they never attempt to correct or regulate; they go to work by the shortest way. They pull down the house.* The way to prevent this 'pulling down of the house,' is by timely reformation. It has long ago, and often been remarked, that wise and temperate reformation is the best mode of avoiding total revolution, and utter subversion.

The improvements which I would suggest do not deserve to be called innovations. My object is to correct and counteract the innovations of time, and to bring back some few of our ecclesiastical institutions to their primitive intention and object.†

1. To render the episcopal office more effective and beneficial, I beg to recommend the revival of a practice which prevailed in the earliest and best ages of the christian church, I mean frequent preaching of the everlasting gospel. St. James the Apostle, and first Bishop of Jerusalem, Ignatius, and Polycarp, and other bishops of the primitive Church, "were instant in season and out of

* Burke. † Archdeacon Berens.

season,' in proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ, by their ministrations of the divine word; and such success attended their zealous efforts in this way, that the knowledge of the Saviour was generally diffused, and churches were planted throughout their dioceses, in which "the word of God grew and multiplied."

Preaching derives no ordinary degree of dignity from the institution and sanction of it by the Lord Jesus himself. It was he who, in order to console the desponding hearts of our first parents, after their disgraceful fall, announced to them, that "the seed of the woman" (who, at the appointed time, was to descend from the Virgin Mary) should defeat the ruinous effects of that sad disaster, and convert it into a benefit to them and their posterity. *

And to fulfil the divine commission given to him "to preach good tidings to the meek," Jesus commenced the erection of his spiritual kingdom in Galilee, by "saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel."† To perpetuate the christian religion, and to effect "the obedience of men to the faith among all nations," the apostles were vested by Jesus, with full authority "to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;"‡ with an express assurance, that he would "be with them always, even unto the end of the world;"§ to bless their ministrations, to the ex-

* Gen. iii. 15. † Mark i. 15. ‡ Ibid. xvi. 15.
§ Matt. xxviii. 20.

tension of his Church militant on earth. If this duty was imperative on the apostles, can their successors, consistently with their obligations to "feed the Church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood,"* plead an exemption from it? Is not the constant and faithful annunciation of God's word, and the administration of the sacraments, a principal part of the sacerdotal office, as obligatory upon the higher, as the lower orders of the clergy? Does not St. Paul affirm that it is the qualification of a bishop who wishes to make full proof of his ministry, "to hold fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers,"† as well as to edify Christian believers, and "build them up in their most holy faith?" Can an indifference to, or dereliction of this sacred portion of our duty be justifiable on any other ground, than that of actual incapacity from sickness or indisposition? Can it be more reasonable in the most dignified ecclesiastic, than it was in the twelve apostles of Christ; "to leave the word of God and serve tables,"‡ or to neglect the discharge of any other part of their clerical functions?

I am well aware that some of our venerable prelates seize every occasion to "hold forth the word of life;" and in this, they are highly commendable. But are there not several others, who seldom or never preach, either in their own cathe-

* Acts xx. 28. † Titus i. 8. ‡ Acts vi. 2.

drals, or any other edifice dedicated to the honour of God? This is to be greatly lamented; because it excites prejudice against their sacred order, amongst the people who imagine that they are so much absorbed with the secular part of their office, as to have no leisure for instructing the flocks, over which they preside, in "the things which make for their everlasting peace."* How desirable (and I speak it with due reverence) would it be to see the admirable piety and zeal of Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, and other prelates, revived in the present day! "They went about like their divine Master, doing good," by "sowing the seed of his heavenly kingdom."

Wherever our bishops preach, their discourses are listened to with devout attention by large and respectable audiences, who delight to hear them descant with energy on the verities and duties of the Christian religion. How much good might be effected, if all our prelates would, from Sabbath to Sabbath occupy some part of Christ's vineyard in dispensing to all the people of their sees, the bread of eternal life, to nourish and comfort their hearts! Many would rejoice, and give glory to God on their account.

2. Annual visitations of the clergy, instead of triennial ones, would be productive of much advantage in every diocese. A period of three years for inspecting the religious condition of the numerous towns and parishes, subject to the juris-

* Luke xix. 42.

diction of a bishop, is in the opinion of very competent judges, much too long. During this long interval, there is sufficient time for the growth and introduction of abuses, which require that prompt correction, which frequent visitations by the bishop only, can effect. 'For the first six hundred years after Christ, the bishops in their own persons visited all the parishes within their respective dioceses every year; and they had several deacons to assist them; after that they had authority in case of sickness, or other public concerns, to delegate priests or deacons to assist them.'

Again, 'by a constitution of Otho, archbishops and bishops shall go about their dioceses at fit seasons, correcting and reforming their churches, and consecrating and sowing the seed of life in the Lord's field.' *

Such a practice has the sanction of the Apostles. Saint Paul and Barnabas, (and no doubt the other Apostles did the same,) "returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and declaring that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." † And in another place we are told St. Paul "went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches." ‡ At Ephesus he convoked the elders of the Church, committed God's flock to their care, warned them against seductive teachers, and commended them to God by prayer and intercession. §

* Burn's Ecclesiastical law, Book IV. p. 14. † Acts xiv. 21—28.
‡ Acts xv. 41. § Acts xx. 17—38.

Bishop Burnet, whose ardent zeal for the extension of Christ's religion, is worthy of the closest imitation, 'every summer, took a tour for six weeks or two months, through some district of his bishoprick, daily preaching and confirming from church to church, so as in the compass of three years, (besides his formal triennial visitation,) to go through all the principal livings in his diocese. He fixed himself for a whole week in the principal market towns, and though he went out every morning and evening to preach and confirm in some parish within seven or eight miles of the place, yet at the evening prayer, for six days together, he catechized the youth of the town in the principal church, and on Sunday confirmed those who had been thus examined and instructed.'

The delivery of a sermon on the discouragements and supports of the pastoral office, by the bishop himself, at the annual visitation, would have a powerful tendency to remind the clergy of their solemn obligations to "be the messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord; to teach and premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever."*

Such annual inspections of a diocese, would not only improve the spirit and practice, not only increase the efficiency, and consequent respecta-

* See Ordination of Priests.

bility of the clergy as a body, but also tend to the revival and wider diffusion of sound religion throughout the land.

3. Constant residence in their sees, where they could exercise a most vigilant control over every department of their sacred charge, would not only raise our bishops in the estimation of the attached friends of the Church, but deprive their malevolent enemies of the power of traducing their conduct. May we not allowedly ask where should the General or commanding officer be found, but at the head of his army in the field of battle, to direct its operations to a successful result; or in the heart of the camp, where, by his presence amongst his troops, he may preserve order and subordination amongst them; regulate and direct everything that may in the least degree conduce to their efficiency and honour? By parity of reason, we should expect the superior officers of the Church, to be generally residing at their palaces; that being thus placed in a central part of their dioceses, they might be able to exercise a constant supervision over every portion of the Lord's vineyard under their care. Thus errors and irregularities might be easily checked, truth would be upheld by authority, opportunities would be afforded to ascertain who amongst the clergy are acting agreeably to their ordination vows, and who they are, who, having undertaken the most solemn office which men can sustain, are wasting their time in secular amusements, to the great scandal of their own characters, to the dishonour of Christ and

his Church, to the injury of other men's souls, and to the inevitable ruin of their own.

If residence be, as it properly is, required from the clergy, why should it be dispensed with in our prelates; whose presence, as spiritual Fathers of the Church of Christ, is constantly and indispensably needful, to encourage and reprove, to comfort and protect their clergy, as well as the people especially committed to their charge? When Jesus selected his twelve apostles to establish his kingdom on earth, he was always as their spiritual head, in and out amongst them, counselling and directing them how to act in every emergency, so as to promote his glory, and their own happiness and salvation.* Our Lord's example in this respect is worthy of imitation by our ecclesiastical superiors, who should know the character of every clergyman in their dioceses, not by vague and often uncharitable reports; but by actual inspection of their spirit and conduct, and the manner in which they discharge the duties of their high and holy vocation. 'The residence in his diocese is the first duty of every bishop: and however shining and specious any offices may be, or however interesting any labours may be which take him away from this silent and unostentatious path of duty, they cannot compensate for the inconvenience and bad example of any considerable relinquishment of it.' †

4. The very name and function of a bishop, im-

* Acts i. 2, 3. Luke xxiv. 36—53.

† Lord Henley on Reform, p. 45.

ply an inspector, and overseer, as it imports,—a dignity in him as the chief of those who labour in the vineyard of Christ; so it does likewise express his obligation to great care and diligence, both in the exercise of his episcopal office, and overseeing the whole flock committed to his superintendence, and more especially in inspecting the deportment and labours of his fellow-workmen, who are subordinate to him in the constitution of the Church, yet ought to be esteemed by him, in imitation of the apostles, his brethren, his fellow-labourers, and fellow-servants.

Considering the great pre-eminence and high importance of the episcopal function, it is not to be wondered at that St. Paul should exhort those who aspire to the distinction, or actually possess it, to be as much more conspicuous for piety, holiness, fidelity, and exemplary purity of spirit and manners, than those who are their inferiors in office, as angels surpass in righteousness the most devout Christians on earth. Such are the high qualifications which he deems requisite for those who are set apart to an office, which obliges them to feed the Church of Christ with the nutritious food of the Gospel, and to take the oversight of it, which is indeed a very laborious employment, but a very honourable one, and greatly tends to advance the glory of God, and to promote the good of mankind, if it be discharged in a proper manner.

"For a Bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, but patient; not greedy of filthy lucre; not covetous

One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity: (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Holding fast the faithful word of God as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers. He must be a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate. Moveover he must have a good report of them that are without, lest he fall into reproach, and the snare of the devil." *

It is clear from this epitome of a Bishop's spirit, character, and conduct, that the standard of knowledge, piety, purity, and righteousness, by which he must regulate his deportment, is not low and very easy of attainment. He is required by it to be a person of an unblemished and irreproachable conduct in every respect, both with regard to his intercourse with the Church, and the world; because "as the steward of God," he is appointed in his name, to take care of his family, and regulate its affairs with a holy discretion. For this reason he must not be fierce and self-willed, obstinate, morose, and arrogant; not easily provoked to anger, not addicted to excess of wine or any kind of intemperance, not litigious and quarrelsome, lest he should degrade himself in the eyes of those who witness his contentious spirit: nor must he be avaricious or greedy of sordid and in-

* 1 Tim. ii. 1—8. Titus i. 5—10.

subordinate ministers of the sanctuary? Will it not stimulate their souls to a holy emulation of their superior's zeal and devotion? Will they not soon catch a portion of the same heavenly flame that burns in the breasts of their bishops? If the pupil is desirous to imitate the excellencies of his preceptor, and the soldier to be inspired with the discretion and heroism of his commanders, so may the clergy be expected to be irradiated with and to reflect all around them, the light, and holiness, and zeal of those, whose province it is to be "examples of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity." *

And as to the flock itself, they will readily "obey them that are appointed to have the rule over them, and submit themselves: they will esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake; because they watch for their souls, as they that must give account "to the omniscient Judge of all men."†

And what would be the combined efficacy of this concentration of excellence and devotedness, and hallowed zeal in the priesthood? Bishops, priests, and deacons, fired with the ardent love of their divine Master, would be as so many "burning and shining lights," illuminating the "dark habitations of ignorance and cruelty," filling his Church militant and triumphant with acceptable worshippers, opposing heresy and error from whatever quarter they might arise, by sound instruction; and finally,

* 1 Tim. iv. 12. ‡ Heb. xiii. 17.

by "feeding the Church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood," the members thereof would become meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."*

Give me the priest these graces shall possess,
Of an ambassador the just address;
A father's tenderness, a shepherd's care,
A leader's courage, which the cross can bear:
Give me the priest, a light upon a hill,
Whose rays his own circumference can fill:
Of a mild, humble, and obliging heart,
Who will his all unto the needy part!
Who can himself and all the world deny,
Lives pilgrim here, but denizen on high.—KEN.

5. The Ordination of Priests and Deacons, is the most momentous part of the episcopal function. It admits into the Church of Christ, those who must either prove highly beneficial, or deeply injurious to its temporal and eternal interests. If duly qualified with gifts and graces, which God only can bestow, but of which those who are in authority, must be the judges, blessedness without end must be the consequence to immortal souls; but, in the absence of necessary qualifications, incalculable mischief, commencing in time, but terminating in eternity, must naturally follow.

Can we feel in the least degree astonished, that the blessed apostle Paul, who was himself an ambassador from the court of heaven, should deem it expedient, when he considered how greatly the honour of God, the benefit of the Church, and the

* Col. i. 12.

happiness of mankind, were concerned in the right discharge of this solemn trust, to obtest and intreat Timothy to use the utmost caution and circumspection in regulating the affairs of the Church, and in appointing ministers to preside in it, who should, by their fitness for the sacred vocation, and their zeal and fidelity in the execution of its duties, manifest that they were "the angels of the churches and the glory of Christ," their heavenly Master.* "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins; keep thyself pure."† The experience of all the churches in Christendom shews the necessity which still exists for strictly observing the apostolical admonition in censuring offenders, in ordaining suitably-qualified persons for the ministry, and in preventing the unholy intrusion of such as profane the sanctuary by their want of vital piety and godliness. It is a subject of profound regret to many, who feel a lively interest in the welfare of the establishment, that, notwithstanding the care exercised by those whose office it is to test the candidate's qualifications for the all-important duties of the priesthood, numbers are admitted within its pale, who can trifle with the most solemn oaths, and convict themselves before God, the Church, and the whole world, of the basest

* 2 Cor. viii. 23, 24. † 1 Tim. v. 22.

prevarication, through a love of secular ease and emolument. Although the Church of England and her venerable bishops require the appointed examiners to "take heed that the persons presented unto them" for ordination, "be apt and meet for their learning and godly conversation, to exercise their ministry duly to the honour of God and the edifying of his Church;" and although each aspirant to the sacred office is required to assert unequivocally, and without reservation, "that he trusts that he is inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon him this office and ministration, to serve God for the promoting of his glory and for the edifying of his people;"* yet, in too many instances, all these awful averments appear to have been made, through the depravity of the heart, either in the most culpable ignorance, or in the grossest dissimulation. To guard against such fatal presumption and wickedness in the sight of God, will it not be advisable for candidates for the holy ministry to scrutinize their own souls to the very bottom, and say with our excellent Liturgy, "from all deceit and hypocrisy, (in so vast a concern), Good Lord, deliver us." If the most excellent and eminently-gifted men, with St. Paul amongst their number,† trembled at a view of their insufficiency to undertake so responsible an office, with what care and deliberation, with what distrust and godly jealousy, for fear of deception, should men approach the altar of the most High God!

* Ordination Service. † 2 Cor. ii. 16.

Woe to those "who run without being sent!" No language that I can employ is able to express sufficiently the insult offered to God, or the irremediable misery which they will inflict upon themselves, by their impiety and presumption.*—First, then according to the apostle's direction for ordaining ministers, "lay hands suddenly on no man," those who have the charge of this great business, must take especial care not to proceed rashly and inconsiderately, before a full scrutiny is made as to the characters, principles, motives, endowments, qualifications, and abilities of the candidates; that they might not be induced by any importunity on their behalf, or by any earthly consideration whatever, to lay hands on improper persons, and thus become "partakers of other men's sins," by introducing them into the sanctuary of God, to the great detriment of the Church, and the ruin of immortal souls.

I freely admit that it is the prerogative of God only to read the heart, and discover its latent motives of action, but surely it is possible by careful examination to elicit most generally the fitness or unfitness of those who present themselves to the Bishop, for the sacred office.

A rigid inquiry should be instituted to ascertain as far as possible, whether they possess the inward vocation of the Spirit, as well as the outward ostensible call of providence. This may be done principally by a vivâ voce examination to assure

* Zech. ii. 17.

the Bishop or his chaplain what the candidate really knows of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, and their tendency to convert and sanctify the heart. A familiar conversation with the candidate by way of question and answer, would soon enable a sound divine, and none but such is qualified to conduct the immensely important affair, to determine what is known and experienced by the former, of the native efficacy of those " doctrines which are according to godliness."

Instead of asking a few critical questions respecting the history and facts recorded in the Old and New Testaments, which are no sufficient examen of the qualifications of the examiner, or satisfactory proof of the correct knowledge of divinity possessed by the person examined, a strict inquiry should be made as to what he experimentally knows respecting the fall of man from the state of integrity in which he was originally created, the universal depravity arising from it, the necessity of the Holy Spirit's influence to renew the heart unto righteousness, and the means by which justification unto eternal life by faith in Christ, is to be obtained by creatures on whom a sentence of condemnation for sin has been passed by the just judgment of Almighty God, who delights in shewing mercy to the penitent; add to this, the necessary connection which subsists betwixt good works and a genuine operative faith, which produces that " holiness, without which, no man shall see the Lord," and a personal acquaintance

with, and experience of, every other doctrine contained in the revealed scheme of our redemption, by the atonement and grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Secondly; as is generally the case with regard to candidates for holy orders, a written essay, or lecture, or sermon, on some great doctrinal topic in divinity, should be required from those who seek for admission into the Church of Christ. Were the course of instruction recommended in chapters 20 and 21, of this work, fairly pursued, every one who presents himself to the Bishop for ordination, would be competent to write with more or less copiousness on any of the leading articles of the Christian religion, and thus demonstrably prove that, having learned "the truth as it is in Jesus" himself, he was duly qualified to instruct others in the things which pertain to their everlasting salvation. Were this the case, we should be spared the pain of hearing false doctrines broached by some, and witnessing the laxity of conduct in others, who ought to walk uniformly by the same rule as that observed by orthodox ministers, and "mind the same thing," namely, the preaching "of Christ crucified," which is "the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth."

Were all our young divines thus competently furnished with sound Christian knowledge derived from the tuition of the Holy Spirit, they would be amply qualified to instruct their flocks in the way of righteousness; they would not only be saved

themselves from becoming the prey of seductive teachers, such as 'the writers of Tracts for the Times,' but be enabled to give salutary admonitions to others "to beware lest they also being led away by the error of the wicked, should fall from their own stedfastness,"* and thus "make shipwreck of the faith and a good conscience."†

Until such a test of the piety, and knowledge, and ability, of candidates for orders, shall be adopted in our schools and universities and churches, it will be in vain to look for any considerable uniformity in the religious sentiments of our ministers, as a body; or to guard them against the introduction and prevalence of those delusions, which, under the specious name of catholic Christianity, have turned so many aside from the way of truth and righteousness, to run greedily after the fatal dogmas of the apostate Church of Rome. I humbly appeal to the great searcher of hearts, that I have not written these things from a captious spirit, or a desire of officious meddling with the appropriate office of my superiors; but simply from a sense of their overwhelming importance, when viewed in connexion with the vitality, purity, and efficiency of a Church, of which, it is my earnest prayer to God, that myself, and all who minister within her pale, may be conscientious and useful labourers.

They who can creditably pass such an examination as the above, and exhibit satisfactory cre-

* 2 Peter iii. 17. † 1 Tim. i. 19.

dentials of their fitness to be "the ambassadors of Christ" to a ruined world, should, without hesitation, be admitted into the Church as persons whose ministrations are likely to be blessed to the edification of their flocks, and to the salvation and happiness of those committed to their charge. To all and each one, who shall answer to this description, the divine Head of the Church militant and triumphant, will accord hereafter "a crown of glory that fadeth not away;" and while they participate this inexpressible bliss themselves, they will have the sublime satisfaction of beholding many others gathered round the throne of God, who will gratefully acknowledge their humble instrumentality, as the secondary cause of all that blessedness which is to be mutually enjoyed by them, throughout all the successive ages of an unending eternity.

On the other hand, they who are destitute in a considerable degree of the qualifications requisite for the ministry of the Gospel of Christ, whatever else they may possess, whether it be splendid talent, or high literary attainment, or exalted rank in society, or influential connexions, or liberal fortunes, should be definitively rejected as unworthy 'to be admitted to that office, whose express and exclusive object is to promote the honour of God, and the edification and salvation of his people.'*

In every department of the arts and sciences, and in all professions and trades, a sufficient rudi-

* Ordination Service.

mental and general knowledge is expected, as the passport to usefulness and celebrity. And is it less imperative on those who are called to assume a sacred office, which an angel may well feel a holy diffidence in undertaking, to cultivate those qualifications both spiritual and natural, which can alone enable them with the divine blessing to become "able ministers of the New Testament;" or in other words, to "study to shew themselves approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth?"*

Finally, we certainly may secure, if that be the paramount object we desire, a moderately learned ministry, without a competent acquaintance with sound divinity; but 'in what a case shall we then be, to deal with any adversary, Atheist, Papist, (Tractators) or Dissenters, or in any sort to promote the honour of God, and carry on the great concerns of the Gospel, when so gross an ignorance in the fundamentals of religion has spread itself so much amongst those who "ought to teach others, and yet need that one teach them the first principles of the oracles of God."'†

"Lay hands suddenly on no man," my Lords, who are the conservative guardians of our Church; neither be partakers, by such means, of other men's sins: "keep yourselves pure." In the admission of every candidate into the sanctuary of God, be solicitous that the cross of Christ should precede, and have due ascendancy in his mind, and let

* 2 Tim. ii. 15.

† Heb. v. 11—14. Bishop Burnet's Pastoral Care.

sound learning, all that deserves that name, follow as an humble and useful auxiliary, to assist him "in adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."*

"Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who hast purchased to thyself an universal Church by the precious blood of thy dear Son; mercifully look upon the same, and at this time so guide and govern the minds of thy servants the Bishops and pastors of thy flock, that they may lay hands suddenly on no man, but faithfully and wisely make choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred ministry of thy Church. And to those which shall be ordained to any holy function, give thy grace and heavenly benediction; that both by their life and doctrine they may set forth thy glory, and set forward the salvation of all men; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."†

7. Another important part of the plan 'for adapting the Church to the exigencies of the times,' is the proposition for effecting the removal of the prelates from Parliament, without alarming those who tremble at any considerable departure from ancient usages; and for providing at the same time for the Church such a degree of influence in the national councils, as will be requisite for its safety. If this can be satisfactorily effected, it will probably do more towards spiritualizing the Church, and advancing the interests of true

* Titus ii. 10.

† Prayer to be used in the Ember Weeks, for those that are to be admitted into holy orders.

religion, than any measure which has been adopted since the days of the reformation.'*

It would seem a great presumption after the Parliamentary peerage of the Prelates has been exercised for so many centuries, and after it has been considered or affirmed as lawful by such men as Hooker, and Gibson, and Warburton, to express any doubt as to its legality, under the letter and spirit of the Christian dispensation. It may however, be most respectfully and most humbly submitted by one who brings no other learning to the subject than a diligent perusal of the New Testament, whether the illustrious persons who have treated upon the subject have examined it so fully upon mere Christian and evangelical principles, as the religious feelings of the common run of mankind have a right to expect. It has been ably argued on legal and constitutional grounds. It has been defended or eulogized as matter of 'ornament,' or of 'high antiquity,' or as 'consonant to right reason,' or 'as essential to an alliance between Church and State,' or 'upon the example of such Jewish precedents as Eli and Esdras.' But it would have been more satisfactory, if the intention of Christ, the divine founder of the Church had been examined with reference to this specific question; and particularly as contained in his declarations, that "His kingdom was not of this world;"† and in his refusal to give sentence in a criminal cause of adultery, and in a civil one of dividing an inheritance.‡

* Lord Henley, p. 46, 47. † John viii. 1—12.
‡ Luke xii. 13—15.

There is so much proneness in mankind to put softening comments on the strict letter of the Bible, and to persuade themselves that its more self-denying injunctions were addressed exclusively to the first promulgators of Christianity, and not intended as matter of perpetual obligation; that it is to be regretted, that it had not been shewn that these doctrines were not of the essence of universal Christianity, and that they were not as much binding on the present ministers of the Gospel as on the apostles themselves. For if they be of such extensive import as to be obligatory on the 'descending ages' of the Church, what can be more clearly and emphatically 'a kingdom of this world,' than the sitting in the supreme legislature and judicature of the realm; the possessing of the power of making and repealing laws; of approving of peace and war; of imposing taxes; of deciding without appeal, in litigations concerning temporal inheritances; and the assertion (though unaccompanied with the exercise) of the right of voting in cases of blood? And even if not in terms a violation of the letter of the New Testament, it may be submitted that it would have been "a more excellent way" to have followed the example of the apostles; who, content with such things as were provided for them, sought neither personal aggrandisement nor civil power, but submitting themselves in all things to the supreme magistrate, relied on the piety and affection of their followers for worldly support.*

* Phil. iv. 14—19.

But leaving the high ground of religious obligation, let us consider how far the interests of Christianity itself are in fact promoted by the prelates having seats in parliament.

First,—Their force, even when united, which is not often the case, is numerically small. It would never be able to resist a very prevalent feeling in the great majority of the assembly. Nor would it produce a more considerable effect, even where numbers were more nearly balanced, in those cases where a strong opinion of the nation at large, had been reiterated in the voice of numerous majorities of the house of Commons.

In the next place, no one can have attended a debate in that assembly, when the passions of the combatants have been excited by that intense degree of party virulence and animosity, which prevails when measures of more than ordinary interest are discussed, without feeling that it is an arena where the ministers of a religion of love and good-will to men, can scarcely with propriety be spectators. But if, as is sometimes the case, and most fatally for the interests of Christianity, they descend from the tone of plain and simple exposition of their sentiments, and become themselves the gladiators in the strife of bitterness and personality, a hateful spectacle of some of the worst passions of our nature is presented, and a scandal is given in the most conspicuous assembly in the realm.'

And as nothing has a more certain effect in secularizing the Church than the introduction of

politics into it, so nothing has a greater tendency to lower it in the estimation of the people. One reason why our judges are so justly popular, is their very general separation from all party violence, and political litigation. The admixture of the ministers of religion in politics, is bad every way. If, as is the natural inclination of religious men, of men looking beyond this present scene, and caring for nothing while they continue in it, but the maintenance of good government and order; they keep aloof from the transitory squabbles of party, and support the administration of the day, they incur the charge of servility, and perhaps of tergiversation. If, on the other hand, they embark in a systematic course of opposition, they seem to be violating those commands which inculcate submission "to the powers that be," and which declare resistance to such powers to be resistance to the ordinance of God.* If they find it their duty to withstand the loud and earnest desires of the great mass of the people, they are pursued by a "hunt of obloquy," which is of infinite evil, in all respects, and which turns into persecutors and revilers, those who ought to "esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." †

If therefore the parliamentary peerage of the prelates be prejudicial to the cause of religion, the next inquiry will be, whether a sufficient substitute for it can be provided ' which will not com-

* Rom. xiii. 2. † 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

promise its interests, nor be of any detriment to the state; a substitute that would strengthen, and not weaken the Church, by the severing of this unnatural alliance between the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of the world.' The real influence of the Church in the counsels of the nation, and the security of her endowments, do not depend on the votes or speeches of a small number of representatives or 'guardians' in parliament, but on the happiness and affections of the people, strengthened and confirmed by her own growing desire to work out her purity and efficiency, and by her faithfulness in the discharge of the great trust which is committed to her hands. These are the arms, by which under the protection of God, she will repel the attacks of all enemies, and secure the support, not only of every religious, but of every peaceful, sober, moral, and temperate man in the kingdom. With these she may rely with confidence on Parliament, and permit her hierarchy, unpolluted by politics, to apply its undivided energies to that sacred object, to which it should be exclusively devoted.' *

'Now though by the alliance between Church and State, no new regulation can be made for Church government, but by the State's authority; yet still there is reason that the Church should be previously consulted, which we must suppose to be well skilled (as in her proper business,) to form and digest such new regulations, before they come

* Lord Henley on Reform, p. 46—53.

before the consideration of the civil legislature.' *

The Church of Christ, in dependance on him, as its vital Head, and agreeably to his sovereign will, has an exclusive right to legislate for itself with regard to doctrines, rituals, and discipline. 'As to ecclesiastical causes, it is certain, that as the magistrate cannot make the laws of nature, such as the authority of parents over their children, or of husbands over their wives, so neither can he make void the law of God; that is from a superior authority, and cannot be dissolved by him. Where a thing is positively commanded or forbid by God, the magistrate has no other authority but that of executing the laws of God, of adding his sanctions to them, and of using his utmost industry to procure obedience to them. He cannot alter any part of the doctrine, and make it to be either truer or falser than it is in itself; nor can he either take away or alter the sacraments, or break any of those rules that are given in the New Testament about them; because in all these the authority of God is express, and is certainly superior to his. The only question that can be made, is concerning indifferent things: for instance, in the canons or other rules of the Church, how far they are in the magistrate's power, and in what cases the body of Christians, and of the pastors of the Church, may maintain their union among themselves, and act in opposition to his laws. It seems very clear, that

* Warburton's Church Alliance, &c. Book II.

in all matters that are indifferent, and are determined by no law of God, the magistrate's authority must take place, and is to be obeyed.' *

8. We conceive then that the presence of the spiritual lords in the House of Peers, might be advantageously for the nation, and beneficially for themselves, dispensed with; and that a sufficient degree of influence in the grand councils of the nation would be preserved for them, by their being allowed to record their deliberate opinions sub silentio with reference to every measure affecting directly or indirectly, the temporal interests and prosperity of the Church, which might be originated in either of the Houses of Parliament. Printed copies of the Bills proposed for adoption might be sent to them for their approval or rejection; and after having gravely decided on their excellencies or defects, their recorded votes might be transmitted to Parliament, and read by the clerk of the House, expressing decidedly, though temperately, the grounds of their lordships' assent to, or disapprobation of, the measure in question. A calm and deliberate vote thus given, and accompanied with a statement of the reasons that induced it, would certainly be as effective with regard to the welfare of the Church, and command as much respect from the assembled legislature of the nation, as if it were delivered in an elaborate speech, made by the Bishops in the House: whilst it would withdraw them from a scene of debate

* Burnet on the Thirty-seventh Article, 527, 528.

and contention, in which an "ambassador of Christ" cannot consistently take a part; it would afford them more abundant leisure for the more effectual discharge of their episcopal functions, as the overseers of that heavenly "flock, which Christ has purchased with his own blood;" * and which it is their bounden duty to "feed with knowledge and understanding." †

* Acts xx. 28. † Jer. iii. 15.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DIGNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CLERICAL OFFICE—DIRECTIONS FOR THE CONSCIENTIOUS DISCHARGE OF ITS SOLEMN FUNCTIONS.

'How low soever the esteem of the clergy may be sunk in a profane and corrupt age, and how much soever the errors and disorders of some clergymen may have contributed to bring this not only upon themselves, but upon others who deserve better treatment, but are unhappy in being mixed with such ill company; yet certainly if we either consider the nature of things in themselves, or the value that is set on that sacred profession, in the scriptures, it will appear that it ought to be considered at another rate than it is. As the soul is infinitely better than the body, and as the purifying and perfecting the soul is preferable to all those mechanical employments which relate to the body, and as eternity infinitely exceeds in value this short and transitory life; so much does the employment of the priesthood excel all others in which men can be engaged. A clergyman, by his character and design of life ought to be a man separated from the cares and concerns of this world, and dedicated to the study and meditation of divine matters, whose conversation ought to be

a pattern for others; a constant preaching to their people; who ought to offer up the prayers of the people in their name, and as their mouth to God: who ought to be praying and interceding for them in secret, as well as officiating for them in public: who ought to be distributing among them the bread of life, the word of God, and to be dispensing among them the sacred rites which are the badges, the union and the support of Christians. He ought to admonish, to reprove, and to comfort them not only by his general doctrine in his sermons, but from house to house, that so he may do these things more home and effectually, than can be done from the pulpit. He is to watch over their souls, to keep them from error, and to alarm them out of their sins, by giving them warning of the judgments of God; to visit the sick, and to prepare them for the judgment and the life to come.' It will be easy to prove this from the names and designations given to those who sustain these sacred functions. That of Deacon is the lowest office in the Church of Christ, 'which signifies properly a servant, or one who labours for another. Such persons are dedicated to the immediate service of God; and are appropriated to the offices and duties of the Church, and hence this term expresses both the dignity and labour of the employment.' Their qualifications for and right discharge of their functions is well described, and highly commended by Saint Paul. "For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase

to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."*

The name of Presbyter or Elder, which is the next order, though at first it was applied not only to Bishops, but to the apostles themselves; yet in succeeding ages it came to be appropriated to the second rank of the officers in the Church. It either signifies a seniority of age, or of Christianity in opposition to a neophyte or novice, one newly converted to the faith; but as by common practice, senate or senator, being at first given to counsellors by reason of their age, came afterwards to be a title appropriate to them; so the title Presbyter (altered in pronunciation to be in English, Priest, or Elder) being a character of respect, denotes both the dignity and likewise the duty belonging to this function.

The title which is now by the custom of many ages given to the highest function in the Church, of Bishop, or inspector, or overseer, as it imports a dignity in him, as the chief of those who labour in Christ's vineyard; so it does likewise express his obligation to care and diligence, both in observing and overseeing the whole flock, and more especially in inspecting the deportment and labours of his fellow workmen, who are subordinate to him in the constitution of the Church, yet ought to be esteemed by him in imitation of the apostles, his brethren, his fellow-labourers, and fellow-servants.†

* 1 Tim. iii. 13. † Burnet's Pastoral Care, pp. 44, 45.

Now there is a real, and not a pretended dignity in this priestly office, if we consider with whom it originated, who first sustained it, and the object which it is designed to answer. Jesus Christ himself, the Lord of glory, the creator of the universe, first condescended to undertake the functions of the priesthood, by preaching the Gospel to our first parents, after the violation of the covenant of works; promising to repair the mischief of the fall, by the establishment of the covenant of grace.* This very circumstance stamps it with peculiar honour and estimation; for can that office be justly thought mean or unnecessary, which God in his infinite wisdom deigned to exercise?

Besides, the very objects to be attained by it, shew its vast importance. It is instituted purposely to raise our ruined race from the lowest depths of degradation into which they had been plunged by the fall, to the highest degree of perfection, of which their nature is capable, to rescue them from the captivity of Satan, and to bring them "into the glorious liberty of the children of God," and to make them legal heirs of everlasting glory. An office accomplishing such momentous benefits, as much surpasses any other which is merely temporal, as eternity outweighs time, or ineffable and eternal joy exceeds everlasting sorrow and torment.

The very designations and figures made use of

* Gen. iii. 8—16.

in scripture to express the sacred functions of a minister of Christ, illustrate their high importance, prove beyond all controversy that whilst they are the most honourable and beneficial, they are at the same time, the most arduous and difficult, and the most responsible and dangerous, with which a finite being can be vested.

They are called pastors and shepherds, whose business is to look after their cattle, furnish them with provender, and tend them with assiduous care. The diligence of a good shepherd has been proverbial in every age. Hence the prophet Isaiah expresses God's care of his people, "by his feeding his flock like a shepherd; by gathering the lambs with his arm, carrying them in his bosom, and gently leading those that are with young."*

Christ emphatically styles himself the good Shepherd, that knows his sheep individually, and does not, as a hireling, flee from them when the wolf approaches, but lays down his life for the sheep."† This term is fully expressive 'of the great trust confided by Christ to the clergy, which likewise supposes a great, a constant, and a tender care in looking to, in feeding, or instructing, in watching over, and guarding the flock against errors and sins, and their being ready to offer themselves to the first fury of persecution.'

The title of stewards, or dispensers, which is the most honourable in a household, is also given to them. These assign to every one his due share

* Isa. xl. 10, 11. † John x. 26—30.

both of labour and of provision; these watch over them, and have the care and order of the other servants assigned to them. So in this great family, of which Christ is the head, his ministers or stewards are not only in a post of great dignity, but also of much labour. (1 Cor. iv. 1, 2.) They ought to be observing the rest of this household, that they may be faithful in the distribution of spiritual food; and so encourage, admonish, or censure, as there may be occasion for it.

They are also called ambassadors for Christ.* He sends them upon an embassy of vast importance; for their business is to negotiate a peace between God and men. With one hand they offer the olive branch of peace; with the other they hold the sword of vengeance, and denounce war against the incorrigible enemies of God. But to extend the sceptre of peace and mercy is the most delightful part of the mission, with which they are intrusted. To them is committed the word, "the ministry of reconciliation;" they are sent by Christ, and do speak authoritatively in God's name; as if God did beseech men by them; so do they in Christ's stead, who is the Mediator, press men to be reconciled to God, by arguments addressed to their fears and hopes, their joys and sorrows. This is a commission of great trust and dignity, but which imports also great obligations.

An ambassador is very solicitous to maintain,

* 2 Cor. v. 18—20.

not only the dignity of his own character, but also the honour of his king and country, and to conduct the business on which he is sent with the greatest fidelity. So if the honour of this title suitably affects the ministers of the gospel, with a just sense of its responsibility, they will strive by God's help to live agreeably to it, supporting the dignity and majesty of the King of kings, who condescends to employ them, and labour with all possible diligence, to effect the great object of their mission—namely, the reconciling sinners to God.

Further; agreeably to this idea, pastors are also called messengers, who are employed on errands of mercy to the world. Hence Jehovah affirms, that "the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they (the people of their charge) should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts."* And what does this office require, but the utmost fidelity to God and man, that his honour may be vindicated, sinners warned of their evil courses, and saints encouraged to persevere in righteousness of life. Another, and yet a more glorious title, is that of angels (Rev. i. 20), who, as they are of a pure and sublime nature, and are called "a flaming fire," so do they always behold the face of our heavenly Father, and delight to do his will; and are also "ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them that are appointed to be heirs of salvation."† Hence faithful ministers are called, not only the messengers or angels of the churches, but also the glory of Christ

* Mal. ii. 7. † Heb. i. 14.

(2 Cor. viii. 23.) The inference from this, is, that men to whom this title is applied, ought to imitate those angelic beings, in the elevation of their souls, and in constantly doing his divine will; more particularly in ministering to the spiritual wants of those, for whom Christ, the angel of the covenant, made himself a sacrifice. They are often called watchmen, (Ezek. iii. 17) who, amongst the Israelites, used to stand on high towers, in order to give the alarm when they saw an enemy approaching. They watched in the night, as well as in the day. This imports that a clergyman ought to be on his watch-tower continually, observing what dangers his people are exposed to, either by their sins, which provoke the judgments of God, or by the designs of their enemies: they ought not by a false respect, to suffer them to sleep and perish in their iniquities, but must denounce the judgments of God against them, and rather incur their displeasure, by an honest freedom of reproof; than suffer them to perish in fatal security. The following admonition shows the nature of a minister's high commission, the reward annexed to a conscientious discharge of his office, and the fearful penalty he incurs by a neglect of his duty. "So thou, O Son of Man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore, thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say to the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I re-

quire at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."* If a man, after seriously weighing the meaning of these awful words, can deliberately undertake the clerical office from a secular desire of preferment or worldly honour, or from a love of indolence, careless of his flock, and seeking to gratify himself, at their expense and safety, I envy not his feelings; I deplore his presumption and perfidy; "for it would be better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were cast into the depth of the sea,"† than to fall into the arms of a sin-avenging God.

They are moreover called builders, which signifies the nature of that labour they must undergo, and the care and exactness, and skill, they must employ in laying a good foundation for God's spiritual edifice, the Church; and raising up an ornamental and safe superstructure; and so edifying their people in their most holy faith, that they may become "an everlasting habitation of God, through the Spirit." They are also styled labourers in God's husbandry (1 Cor. iii. 9) in God's vineyard, appointed to sow, plant, and water, and to cultivate the soil of the Church, and make it fruitful, in order that it may yield a glorious harvest in the day of the Lord Jesus.§ This requires continual and hard labour, great pains and diligence.

* Ezek xxxiii. 7—10. † Mark ix. 42. ‡ Eph. ii. 22.
§ Matt. xx. 1, 9. 1 Cor. iii. 6.

Finally; ministers are designated by the name of soldiers of Jesus Christ, that they may fight manfully against all the combined hosts of darkness.* The fatigues, the dangers, and difficulties of the military life, are so well understood as to render any comment upon it unnecessary.

Upon an enumeration of the names thus used to designate this sacred office, upon a full consideration of the labour, and diligence, and vigilance, and wisdom, requisite for the faithful performance of it, can it be matter of reasonable surprise, that some very eminent men among the Fathers† should draw back from it, with a *nolo episcopari:* or that any honest man, under a sense of its responsibility, should exclaim with St. Paul, "And who is sufficient for these things?"‡ And yet, in despite of all these solemn admonitions, there are not a few, who, actuated by merely carnal motives, can coolly lay profane hands on the ark of God, and rush uninvited into his sanctuary, to offer unhallowed fire on his altar, like Nadab and Abihu, to the destruction of their own souls, and of those who have been deluded by them.§

It is clear, then, that the ministry is the most responsible and dangerous office which a man can sustain. Fidelity to God and man is particularly required of those who are called to exercise it. If an individual in our parish, or congregation, is lost for want of proper instruction and reproof from his spiritual guide, the criminality of it will be laid to

* Ephes. vi. 12. † Ambrose and others. ‡ 2 Cor. iii. 16.
§ Levit. x. 1—8.

his charge; for, had he been duly warned and rightly taught "the things which make for his peace," he would not perhaps have come to so fearful an end. In what light God regards the faithless, the ignorant, the neglectful, the mercenary, the indolent, and incompetent pastor, may be inferred from his own declaration concerning him, and the condign punishment he will hereafter inflict upon him; "Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened."* No one should aspire to "this honour, but he that is called of God as was Aaron."† He should receive an outward vocation from a concurrence of favourable circumstances, and from suitable qualifications for the acceptable discharge of the high and solemn functions of the priesthood; and he should receive a clear internal call to it, by the gifts and graces of the Spirit of Christ; so that he may be able sincerely and *ex animo*, to affirm, "I trust I am inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon me this office and ministration, to serve God for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his people."‡ If any candidate for the ministry makes this declaration, presumptuously, insincerely, and deceitfully, with a view to the assumption of the sacred office, from a desire of emolument or ease; though he may deceive his ecclesiastial superior, he is guilty of a solemn and

* Zech. xi. 17. † Hebrews. ‡ Ordination for Deacons.

deliberate act of perjury, for which he must answer at the tribunal of Christ. To guard men against such awful prevarication, the apostle gives the following caution; "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."*

But the beneficial consequences resulting from the office both to themselves, and to those for whom it is undertaken, when faithfully discharged, are sufficiently great to compensate the toil, and privations, and diligence of conscientious labourers in the vineyard of Christ. To stimulate the zeal and fidelity of the ministers of the Gospel, St. James says, "Let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."† Is it nothing then to be made the honoured instrument of enlightening the ignorant with saving knowledge; of emancipating the captives of Satan from the most degrading bondage, and bringing them "into the glorious liberty of the children of God?" Is it nothing to pluck men as brands from the everlasting burnings, and exalt them to the bliss of heaven? And these immense benefits constantly flow from the "preaching of Christ crucified," though to the prejudiced Jew, as well as to the worldly wise, it may be "a stum-

* Gal. vi. 7, 8. † James v. 20.

bling block," and "to the Greeks" and philosophers of the age "it may be foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."* If the apostle on a contemplation of the blessedness he had been made the medium of communicating to the Thessalonians, could say "for what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy:" with what refined delight will the faithful pastor behold, at the revelation of Jesus from heaven, his beloved flock whom his ministrations have made "wise unto salvation," secure in the heavenly fold, from every danger, and in the enjoyment of everlasting life! Should not such a consummation of his pious labours cheer him on to the patient endurance of the cross in this life, that he may "receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away," in the next.†

2. It will not, I trust, be thought presumptuous or impertinent, by the candid part of my readers, if I venture to give some plain directions for the right discharge of the clerical office. I cannot plead youth or inexperience for my presumption, if it be such: for having now arrived at the declension of life, and having officiated as a minister of the Church of England for upwards of thirty years in populous towns and parishes, I may be allowed, without breach of modesty, to "put my

* 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. † 1 Peter i. 5, 4.

junior brethren in remembrance of those things which are calculated to make them good ministers of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and good doctrine, whereunto they should strive to attain." *

First, in order that a minister may become as "a scribe well instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom," and be competent to teach others the way of eternal life, and be "able to bring out of his treasure things new and old" † he should study the word of God with diligence, attention, and prayer; for "the holy scriptures are able to make him wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." ‡ We should then, be as conversant with our Bibles, yea, every part of them, as a skilful mariner is with his compass; that we may be able to guide our people to "the haven where their souls would be;" § or as an ambassador is with the instructions which he receives from his king and privy council; for effecting a peace, negociating a treaty of commerce, or any other business which he is directed to manage. In like manner, to constitute "an able minister of the New Testament," we must understand the Gospel in all its doctrines, precepts, provisions, and consolations, as the grand

* 1 Tim. iv. 6. † Matt. xiii. 52. ‡ 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.
§ Psalm cvii. 30.

charter of man's salvation. No knowledge of general literature, or science, or history, however important as an auxiliary, can possibly compensate for ignorance of the scriptures, which alone propound the mode of our acceptance with God. For want of sound biblical learning, and an experimental acquaintance with the divine oracles, ministers are tempted to substitute their own crude theories for the doctrines of Christ; their own fancies for the solid truths of the Christian religion. And what is the necessary consequence; instead of feeding the souls of their hearers with the bread of eternal life, they "perish for lack of knowledge," * instead of training them up for a blissful immortality, they are guided into "the broad road that leadeth to destruction." † How expedient is it therefore, to be mindful of the exhortation of St. Paul in his charge to Timothy; "take heed to thyself, and to the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." ‡

Secondly; such a practical knowledge of the will of God must be followed by a faithful exhibition of it in all our discourses from the pulpit. In every address, we must do what is required from a witness in a court of civil justice, 'speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,' whether men will reject or receive our testimony; in a word, "seeing we have this ministry, we must renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, not

* Hosea iv. 6. † Matt. vii. 13. ‡ 1 Tim. iv. 16.

walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commend ourselves to every man's conscience as in the sight of God."*

What that particular line of preaching is which we should adopt, is not only pointed out in scripture, but also in the doctrinal articles of the Church, which are founded upon it, from the first to the thirty-first Article. The oracles of eternal truth require us to set forth the rectitude of man in his paradisaical state, his shameful fall, and the disastrous effects of it upon his posterity; the universal depravity of mankind, their alienation from God, and enmity to him "by wicked works;" their recovery by his grace through faith in Christ, creating their hearts unto righteousness, and enabling them to walk religiously in good works; the necessity of holiness to qualify men for the participation of heavenly glory; the influence of the Holy Spirit to enlighten, sanctify, and enable us to comply with the revealed will of God; the intercession of Jesus Christ to procure the donation of those spiritual blessings which he died to purchase; and an unshaken reliance on his atonement, for our acceptance with God, and admission to his glorious kingdom.

Nor must we forget to inculcate due attention to every branch of Christian duty, whether civil or religious, social or domestic; calling on our hearers to shew the efficacy of divine truth on

* 2 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

their hearts, by "adorning the doctrines of God our Saviour in all things."* In fine, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise," we should incessantly urge our congregations not only to "think on these things;"† but to reduce them constantly to practice. By thus inculcating the principles of the Gospel of Jesus powerfully and practically, and engrafting its various precepts on them, we shall "build our hearers upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord."‡

That this evangelical style of preaching has been much on the increase of late years amongst the clergy, is obvious, from the spirit which pervades their sermons and publications; but that there are yet some, "who shun to declare the whole counsel of God,"§ is an appalling fact, which is a just subject of lamentation. Several departed prelates of great piety and eminence, complained of this shunning of the cross of Christ in their day, as one of the fruitful causes of the growth of dissent, and of that little estimation in which the Church is held by too many of the people.

Few men it may be presumed have worn the

* Titus ii. 10. † Phil. iv. 8. ‡ Eph. ii. 20—22.
§ Acts xx. 27.

mitre with more lustre than Archbishop Secker; and there is perhaps no writer whose works are more generally recommended to the perusal of the clergy by the bishops and dignitaries of our Church. His opinion therefore cannot too highly deserve our attention. Treating then directly on our subject, he addresses the clergy thus:—'To improve the people effectually, you must be assiduous in teaching the principles not only of virtue and natural religion, but of the Gospel; and of the Gospel, not only as almost explained away by modern refiners, but "as the truth is in Jesus;" as it is taught by the Church of which you are members; as you have engaged by your subscriptions and declarations, that you will teach it yourselves. You must preach to them faith in the ever-blessed Trinity; you must set forth the original corruption of our nature; our redemption according to God's eternal purpose in Christ, by the sacrifice of the cross; our sanctification by the influences of the Divine Spirit; the insufficiency of good works, and the efficacy of faith to salvation. The truth, I fear, is, that many, if not most of us, have dwelt too little on these doctrines in our sermons, partly from not having studied theology deeply enough to treat of them ably and beneficially: God grant it may never have been for want of inwardly experiencing their importance. But whatever be the cause, the effect has been lamentable. Our people have grown less and less mindful, first of the distinguishing articles of their creed, then, as will always be the case,

of that one which they hold in common with the heathens; flattering themselves, that what they are pleased to call a moral and harmless life, though far from being either, "is the one thing needful! Reflections have been made upon us on account of these things, by Deists, Papists, brethren of our own."* Again, he says, 'we have in fact lost many of our people to sectaries, by not preaching in a manner sufficiently evangelical; and we shall neither recover them from the extravagancies into which they have run, nor keep more from going over to them, but by returning to the right way.' † That great Divine, Bishop Horsley, has occupied nearly a whole Charge in lamenting and reprobating such conduct. The reason, in this prelate's opinion, why the labours of the clergy are not more efficacious in stopping the progress of infidelity and sectarianism, he says, is 'that erroneous maxims are gone abroad, which for several years past, if my observations deceive me not, have very much governed the conduct of the parochial clergy in the ministration of the word. These maxims are, 'that it is more the office of a Christian teacher to press the practice of religion upon the consciences of his hearers, than to inculcate and assert its doctrines; and that practical religion and morality are one and the same thing: that moral duties constitute the whole or by far the better part, of Christianity. Both these maxims, his lordship proceeds, are er-

* Charge, chap. i. p. 79. † Ibid.

roneous; both, as far as they are received, have a pernicious influence on the ministry of the word. The first most absurdly separates practice from the motives of practice. The second, adopting that separation, reduces practical Christianity to heathen virtue; and the two taken together have much contributed to divest our sermons of the genuine spirit and savour of Christianity, and to reduce them to mere moral essays. The system chiefly in request, with those who seem the most in earnest in this strain of preaching, is the strict but impracticable, unsocial, sullen morality of the stoics. Thus under the influence of these two pernicious maxims, it too often happens, that we lose sight of that which is our proper office, to publish the word of reconciliation, to propound the terms of peace and pardon to the penitent; and we make no other use of the high commission that we bear, than to come abroad one day in the seven, dressed in solemn looks, and in the external garb of holiness, to be the apes of Epictetus.'* The late eloquent and eminent Bishop of Durham speaks forcibly on the same subject. Having noticed the obligations which are upon ministers to preach the established doctrines, he says, 'The doctrines which you are thus bound by your duty to God, to the laws of your country, and the engagements of your profession, to inculcate and maintain, have been of late years too much neglected: as if doctrines of faith were subordinate parts

* Bishop Horsley's Charge, 1793, p. 3—6.

[illegible] Christianity. For all these distinguishes Christianity from other religions, is doctrinal.* In a charge delivered in 1797, he adds, upon the most mature view of the subject, I am persuaded, that the weakness of religion is, in a great measure, to be ascribed to the following causes: and then specifying two, one of them is, an infrequency in the mode of those subjects which constitute the peculiar doctrines of Christianity.

The eminent and eminently pious Bishop of London, Dr. Porteus, thought it necessary to give a similar admonition to his clergy, which is, in effect, acknowledging a similar occasion for it. His words are,—"It will not be sufficient to amuse your hearers with ingenious moral essays on the dignity of human nature, the beauty of virtue, and the deformity and inconvenience of vice. This will be a fruitless and ineffectual effort: will be "as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." If you wish for any effectual success, you must take a very different course. You must lay before your hearers with plainness and with force, the great fundamental doctrines of the Gospel." And having enumerated these, his lordship proceeds, by saying, these are the great evangelical doctrines which must be pressed repeatedly with devout and solemn earnestness on the minds of your hearers, which can alone speak to their consciences, their affections, and their hearts.†

Those ministers who, from a disbelief of the ve-

* Charge, 1792. † Charge, 1799. p. 22, 23.

rities of the christian system, or from a rooted dislike to its peculiar doctrines, refuse to preach them to their congregations uniformly and faithfully, should in order to be consistent with themselves, retire from the Church of England, whom they deeply injure by their heterodoxical notions, and leave the ministration of the word to the faithful servants of Christ, who are prepared, at any sacrifice, however costly, at any privations and labours, however painful, to "do the work of Evangelists," and feed the souls of the people committed to their charge with the wholesome bread of eternal life. God requires this at the hands of all who minister in sacred things. "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully."* Such "ministers of Satan who transform themselves into angels of light,"† can never benefit the flocks over which they preside, or glorify God, or "give up their final account with joy."‡ This is solemnly avowed by him who knoweth their hearts. "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord? Is not my word like a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his neighbour: that use their tongues, and say, he saith. Behold, I am against them that prophecy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness:

* Jer. xlviii. 10. † 2 Cor. xi. 14. ‡ Heb. xiii. 17.

yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord."* Here we learn that every substitute for the unsophisticated word of God, is mere chaff and refuse, that may destroy, but cannot nourish men's souls; that every one who is called to the sacred function of the priesthood, and keeps back the precious wheat of the gospel, starves his hearers; and however he may be admired for his eloquence or ingenuity, is displeasing to God, who repudiates his unhallowed zeal with scorn, and declares that he can only aggravate his own condemnation, by ruining his deluded votaries. Can any man, after this, deliberately intrude himself into the sanctuary of God, where his presence is no less offensive to him, than it is injurious to the Church, which he scandalizes by his doctrine, life, and example! To effectuate our own perdition is sufficient, without drawing down, at the day of judgment, the accumulated curses of those who may have been irreparably deceived by our pernicious errors. To hear only one lost soul reproach us at last with our infidelity, will be appalling enough: but when multitudes shall rise up and join in bearing witness against our faithlessness and neglect, it will fill our minds with inconceivable and overwhelming anguish and torment.

To avert such a tremendous punishment, let us now investigate the manner, in which we have

* Jer. xxiii. 28—33.

discharged the obligations incurred at our ordination. Frequently let us ponder the vows by which we then bound ourselves to act with the utmost fidelity towards God and man. "Wherefore consider with yourselves the end of your ministry towards the children of God, towards the spouse and body of Christ; and see that you never cease your labour, your care, and diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you, according to your bounden duty, to bring all such as are or shall be committed to your charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place left among you, either for error in religion, or for viciousness of life."* Have we been "ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous doctrines contrary to God's word; and to use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, within our cures, as need required, and occasion was given?†

Let us put it honestly to our consciences as in the sight of God, whether we have truly fulfilled these solemn engagements made in the face of heaven, the Church of Christ, and the whole world. If with humility and self-distrust, calling to mind the imperfections of our best endeavours to "serve God acceptably in the Gospel," we can appeal to him, as the searcher of all hearts, and say, "thou knowest all things; thou knowest

* Service used at the Ordination of Priests. † Ibid.

that we love thee;"* and have diligently sought to "advance thy glory in the conversion of sinners," happy are we now, in having the testimony of a good conscience, as well as the holy and refined gratification of seeing some, if not many seals to our ministry; and at the great day of retribution, "when Christ the chief Shepherd" shall appear to recompense the fidelity of his servants, how will our happiness be augmented by "receiving a crown of glory that fadeth not away."† But if, on the other hand, we stand convicted in our consciences of gross and criminal neglect of our duty to God, and the flock of his pasture, what compunction and remorse should we feel, even in this life, and with what horror should we look forward to the decisive day which "shall try every man's work of what sort it is!"

Again, let us place ourselves on a dying bed, and ask ourselves, have we been faithful to the solemn trust confided to us? Have we "watched for men's souls as they that must give account?"‡ Should God, at the awful hour of dissolution, when the soul is about to take its flight to the eternal world, visit our unfaithfulness upon us, oh what insufferable anguish will seize and appal our hearts! But should his Spirit then bear witness to our zeal and devotion in his service, it will smoothe our descent to the grave, and lighten it with the glorious dawn of everlasting day.

Finally; let us stand in imagination at the tri-

* John xxi. 15—18. † 1 Pet. v. 4. ‡ Heb. xiii. 17.

bunal of Christ, 'where the good meet punishment, and the bad reward.' There the hypocritical and faithless shepherd will be unmasked and stripped of his disguise. There the conscientious minister of Jesus will be duly recognized and esteemed for "his work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."* And whilst the mercenary hireling will hear his doom with inexpressible horror, "depart, O accursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;" with what ecstatic delight will the good shepherd receive the plaudit of his gracious master, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."†

These are reflections well adapted to awaken the indolent and careless pastor, to a sense of the danger he incurs by a neglect of his solemn trust, and to stimulate the faithful pastor, "to be stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as he knows that his labour is not in vain in the Lord."‡

Thirdly; it is highly desirable that the direction of the Fifty-ninth Canon should be strictly enforced. 'Every parson, vicar, or curate, upon every Sunday and Holy-day, before evening prayer, shall, for half an hour or more, examine and instruct the youth and ignorant persons of his parish, in the ten commandments, the articles of the Belief, and in the Lord's Prayer; and shall diligently hear, instruct, and teach them the cate-

* 1 Thess. i. 5. † Matt. xxv. 21. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 58.

chism set forth in the Book of Common Prayer.' Lectures delivered in a plain scriptural stile on this excellent formulary of the Christian faith, would not only attract, and inform the younger part of our audience in the grand principles and precepts of our holy religion, but prove highly beneficial to the congregation generally, and parents particularly, by reminding them of their duty, as well as their privilege, "to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."* It would not only put them in remembrance of their baptismal engagements, but vividly impress them with the important truths inculcated in the sermons of their pastor. Familiar lectures on the catechism, epistles, collects, and gospels, would be fraught with spiritual profit to our people, by embodying the grand articles of the Christian faith and practice. It behoves the clergy, therefore, in the present state of things, to have recourse to every legitimate means and appliance, for accommodating the Church to the spiritual necessities of their flocks, that their souls may be properly nourished with the bread of life.

Fourthly; the studies of the clergy, when rightly conducted, essentially contribute to the vigorous and effective discharge of their duty to God and man; and surely, they who undertake to guide others in the way to heaven, should walk unceasingly themselves in the road that leads to it, and how can this be the case, unless by a diligent pe-

* Ephes. vi. 4.

rusal of the word of God, with supplication for a right understanding of its divine truths, they become so fully conversant with the oracles of the Lord, as to be qualified to enlighten the ignorant, to convince the adversaries of Christ of their errors, to alarm and rouse the thoughtless sinner to a sense of his perilous condition, to solace the afflicted and contrite, to detect and expose the pretensions of the pharisaical hypocrite, to edify the Christian believer, and to direct the inquirer to Zion, the habitation of the most high? Saint Paul exhorts all ministers, as he did Timothy, to "meditate constantly on these things; to give themselves wholly to them;" that is, according to the expressive meaning of the original, ἐν τούτοις ἴσθι to be in them, or totally absorbed by them; "that their profiting may appear to all."*

Sound commentators, such as Bishop Lowth, and Scott, on the Old Testament, and Dr. Doddridge, on the New, may be usefully resorted to, if not entirely relied on, to assist us in elucidating the more difficult portions of holy writ.

Some acquaintance with ecclesiastical history, such as that furnished by Milner and Mosheim, will give us valuable information as to the origin and spread of heresy, the progress of divine truth in every age, and help us to form an accurate judgment of the best method of combating error, and establishing truth, on its proper basis.

Added to a correct knowledge of the Bible,

* 1 Tim. iv. 15.

which will always furnish the best and safest materials for the composition of our sermons, the soundest bodies of christian theology must be closely studied, and the sentiments they teach, in accordance with scripture, be imbibed. Let us be followers of them, in proportion as they follow Christ; and whilst we implicitly "call no one master on earth, for one is our Master who is in heaven;"* yet let us ever be ready "to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest "those true sayings of God," which his faithful ministers, eminent for orthodoxy and piety, have left on record, for our instruction in righteousness. From these sources, we may derive a fund of true wisdom and religious learning, to answer all the exigencies of the christian life, for ourselves, and to render us competent, with God's blessing, to make others "wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus."

I cannot corroborate these remarks with more appropriate thoughts and language, than in the words used in the service for the ordination of priests:—"Forasmuch then as your office is both of so great excellency, and of so great a difficulty, ye see with how great care and study ye ought to apply yourselves, as well that ye may show yourselves dutiful and thankful unto that Lord, who hath placed you in so high a dignity, as also to beware, that neither you yourselves offend, nor be occasion that others offend. Howbeit ye cannot have a mind,

* Matt. xxiii. 8—12.

and will thereto of yourselves; for that will and ability is given of God alone; therefore ye ought and have need to pray earnestly for his Holy Spirit. And seeing you cannot, by any other means, compass the doing of so weighty a work, pertaining to the salvation of man, but with doctrine and exhortation taken out of the holy scriptures, and with a life agreeable to the same; consider how studious ye ought to be in reading and learning the scriptures, and in framing the manners both of yourselves, and of them that specially pertain to you, according to the rule of the same scriptures: and for this self-same cause, how ye ought to forsake and set aside (as much as you may) all worldly cares and studies; so that, as much as lieth in you, you will apply yourselves wholly to this one thing, and draw all your cares and studies this way; that by daily reading and weighing of the Scriptures, ye may wax riper and stronger in your ministry; and that ye may so endeavour yourselves from time to time to sanctify the lives of you and yours, and to fashion them after the rule and doctrine of Christ, that ye may be wholesome and godly examples and patterns for them to follow."

Acting agreeably to these wise directions, we shall exhibit the efficacy of genuine and unaffected religion in our preaching, lives, and spirit, recommend it to others, and lead them to inquire seriously, "what they must do to inherit everlasting life."*

* Matt. xix. 16.

Fifthly: great advantage results to the flock and to the shepherd himself from his frequent pastoral visits to their abodes. We have the example and sanction of the great apostle of the Gentiles for this salutary undertaking. He not only went from place to place in the discharge of his high function, as an inspector of the churches, which he planted, "but taught publicly, and from house to house."* So let us carry the glad tidings of the gospel through the length and breadth of our parishes; not only visiting the affluent and more respectable, but even the poorest of our flock, who are, generally speaking, more accessible, than the rich, and more disposed to receive and profit by our ministrations, than those who abound most with the perishable things of time and sense.

The poor especially claim the pastor's attention, not only on account of their want of *learning*, but because of the hardships and privations to which they are called to submit. Plunged in affliction by the loss of dear relations, or buffeted by the storms of life, they will gladly listen to our voice, whilst we persuade them to come, by penitence and faith, and prayer, to Jesus, that they may find rest for their souls."†

The sick must never be forgotten or neglected: we must never fail to offer to them 'the balm for all their wounds, the cordial for all their cares.' We must tell them of Christ the heavenly phy-

* Acts xx. 18—21. † Matt. xi. 28—30.

sician, whose blood not only cleanseth from all sin, but healeth every malady of the soul.

Thus, not only will Christian knowledge be diffused amongst the habitations of ignorance, but an appetite for public instruction be created, which will be followed by the happiest consequences.

The promotion and superintendance of schools for the religious education of the rising generation, will, with the divine blessing, prove nurseries of piety and godliness, in which many a tree of righteousness of God's own right hand planting, will be reared and brought by the ministry of the word, to maturity. Many a youth, having learned to fear God and work righteousness, in these religious seminaries, may "rise up" at the resurrection of the just, and "call their benefactors blessed."*

Lastly; the life, spirit, and conduct of a clergyman have a commanding influence over his ministry, to render it acceptable, or injurious to his flock, the church, and the community generally. The greatest gravity and prudence, combined with humility, meekness, temperance, self-denial, patience, and suavity of manners, should mark the demeanour of Christ's ambassadors in all their intercourse with men; and in all their labours to advance his glory. St. Paul in his address to Timothy and Titus accurately depicts the character and the spirit which should actuate every minister of the gospel. A Bishop must be blame-

* Prov. xxxi. 28.

less as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate. In all things shewing himself a pattern of good works; in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of them. They must be an example to believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity."* Titus i. 7—10; ii. 7, 8.

As their office is so exalted, and raises them on an eminence that they may be conspicuous in the sight of all men, they should, on this very account, be most exemplary in their spirit and deportment. As the Nazarites were commanded to refrain from the use of forbidden things, that they might be consecrated to God,† so ministers being set apart to a sacred office, in which they represent the majesty of heaven, are required to live devoted to him who confers this dignity upon them. "Be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord."‡

Under the law, the judicial and sacerdotal offices were occasionally united, But I cannot think that such a practice can be wisely drawn into precedent for the appointment of clerical magistrates under the Gospel dispensation. The ministers of the Christian Religion sustain a sacred function, the discharge of which calls for their undivided

* 1 Tim. iv. 12. † Numb. vi. 1—22. ‡ Isa. lii. 11.

attention. They act under a dispensation of mercy, and should not be a party to the administration of civil justice, which must make large demands upon their time, and divert their minds from duties of a more obligatory and important nature. But the worse consequence arising from clergymen being magistrates, is, their being forced into conflict with the parties, whose prejudices and passions will be sure to be excited against them, if they act ever so justly and circumspectly. For these reasons it would seem highly desirable that the duties of the magistracy should be left exclusively to country gentlemen, whose knowledge of the law and public business is a sufficient qualification to ensure the due exercise of justice and equity.

The pursuits and pleasures of a clergyman should be of such a nature as not to disparage his office in the eye of the world. Even his recreations and relaxations should bear the stamp of innocence upon them. Bishop Burnet* observes, 'that his parish and garden should be the chief source of his amusement.' He should not mingle with the giddy throng, "nor run with them to the same excess of riot." †

Now where a clergyman thus acts suitably to his profession, he is justly entitled to the esteem of the Church, and society at large, and his usefulness deserves the just encomium of the Poet:

* Bishop Burnet's Pastoral Care, a work that cannot be too highly recommended to the clergy. † 1 Peter iv. 3—6.

"The pulpit, (in the sober use
Of its legitimate, peculiar powers)
Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,
The most important and effectual guard,
Support, and ornament, of virtue's cause.
There stands the Messenger of truth: there stands
The legate of the skies! His theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated law speaks out
Its thunders; and by him in strains as sweet
As angels use, the gospel whispers peace.
He stablishes the strong, restores the weak,
Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,
And, armed himself in panoply complete
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms,
Bright as his own, and trains by every rule
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
The sacramental host of God's elect!
Are all such teachers? would to heaven all were!
I venerate the man, whose heart is warm,
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine, and whose life
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That he is honest in the sacred cause.
To such I render more than mere respect,
Whose actions say that they respect themselves."

Cowper's Task, Vol. II. p. 53, 55.

But what a sad reverse, to this bright and attractive picture, does the carnal spirit and conversation of a worldly and mercenary teacher present! His heart is alienated from God, and the work in which it should be sincerely engaged. "He is an hireling, and careth not for the flock;"* but leaves them to the devouring wolf. Insatiate in the pursuit of contaminating pleasures, he is to be frequently found joining in the diversions of the field, the gambling table, the midnight dance, and the assembly, where his mind is intoxicated with the

* John x. 13.

vanity of the scene, and becomes earthly and carnal. Can we wonder that a righteous God who observeth all their ways, should feel indignant at their conduct, and say, of such characters, as he said of faithless priests, in the time of his prophet Malachi; "ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of Hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law."* Can we marvel if such characters sink in public estimation, degrade their profession, "cause the adversaries of the Lord to speak reproachfully," scandalize the Church, and throw an almost insurmountable stumbling-block in the way of men's salvation? Can we be surprised if such unholy and mercenary hirelings worry and drive away the sheep of Christ's flock from the fold of righteousness "who know his voice," and the cheering sound of those who act in unison with him; but "will not follow, but flee from them; because they know not the voice of strangers."† By the inconceivable joys of heaven, and by the damnation of hell, I affectionately conjure such men to repent in time of their criminality; lest they should be visited hereafter, with that fearful vengeance which God will pour on the heads of those, "who have run without being sent."‡ But if my admonition should not arrest their progress,

* Mal. ii. 7—10. † John xi. 17. ‡ Jer. xxiii. 21.

I leave them to the castigation of the evangelical Poet, with an earnest prayer to God, that it may produce that timely reformation which will enable them to make some reparation for the incalculable injury which they have done.

'Ye clergy, while your orbit is your place,
Lights of the world, and stars of human race;
But if eccentric, ye forsake your sphere,
Prodigies ominous, and viewed with fear.
The comets' baneful influence is a dream;
Your's real and pernicious in the extreme.
What then! are appetites and lusts laid down
With the same ease that man puts on his gown?
Will avarice and concupiscence give place,
Charmed by the sounds—Your Reverence or Your Grace?
No. But his engagement binds him fast;
Or, if it does not, brands him to the last,
What atheists call him—a designing knave,
A mere Church juggler, hypocrite, and slave.
Oh, laugh or mourn with me the rueful jest,
A cassocked huntsman, and a fiddling priest!
He from Italian songsters takes his cue:
Set Paul to music, he shall quote him too.
He takes the field, the master of the pack
Cries—Well done Saint! and claps him on the back.
Is this the path of sanctity? Is this
To stand a way-mark in the road to bliss?
Himself a wanderer from the narrow way,
His silly sheep, what wonder if they stray?
Go, cast your orders at your bishop's feet
Send your dishonoured gown to Monmouth street!
The sacred function in your hands is made—
Sad sacrilege! no function—but a trade.'

Cowper on the Progress of Error, Vol. I. p. 39, 40.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

THE EXPEDIENCY OF AN IMPROVED SYSTEM OF DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH—THE DEFECTIVE STATE OF SUCH DISCIPLINE—THE REMEDY PROPOSED.

A MACHINE, however judiciously it may be contrived, and however admirably it may be adapted to answer the valuable ends for which it is constructed, is of little or no use, unless its motions are properly regulated, and rightly directed: if it be ill-worked, the amount of benefit to be looked for will be trifling; but if it be guided by skilful hands, it cannot fail to produce the desired effect.

In a nation, however wise and salutary may be its laws and form of government, nothing but confusion and every evil work can be expected, if the laws are not duly enforced against offenders; and good subjects protected by them, in the maintenance of their just rights. Where caprice and passion, and arbitrary will predominate,—there violence, and disorder, must shamefully prevail.

Even in a family, one must rule; the others obey and be in subjection. Without a salutary

control exercised by parents, children indulging their own perverse inclinations, will rush into folly and indiscretion.

And is good discipline less necessary in managing the complex and important affairs of Christ's Church, which have so direct a reference to men's eternal welfare, than in the proper management of a machine, or the regulation of domestic concerns, or the more weighty business of a kingdom, which with all their importance, are confined in great measure to the short-lived interests of time?

That the Church then should exercise a right discipline over all its members generally, its ministers, and everything which relates to its efficiency, purity, and prosperity particularly, cannot I conceive, be reasonably denied. Without such a salutary control in ecclesiastical matters, due order, regularity, and subordination, cannot be preserved, and the exercise of it ought to be summary and unfettered, to make it properly effective.

It is certain however, that whatever power of this kind has been possessed by the Church of England, has been clogged with so many difficulties and impediments, that scandalous offences both against doctrine and morals, have often escaped with impunity.

Over the conduct of stipendiary curates, the Bishops have exercised sufficient control; for the most part with as great moderation and temper, as occasions demanded; but in some instances, without that discretion and wisdom which ought to characterize the exhibition of the almost abso-

solute and irresponsible and undefined power formerly possessed by them over their inferior brethren. As the parties in question have gone to "that bourn, whence no traveller returns," to give up their account to God, I shall pass over in silence what I might justly complain of, with the observation of that trite maxim, 'nil de mortuis, nisi bonum.'

But in the case of the beneficed clergy, the power of the bishops, which could of late only be exerted, through the medium of their consistorial courts, has been so encumbered with antiquated and tedious forms, so checked by the courts of common law, that it was almost worse than nugatory. Some instances might be adduced to shew that in their endeavours to exercise episcopal control and correction upon delinquent clergymen, Bishops have been put to enormous expence, to the great detriment of their families. I am happy in being able to observe that a more prompt and decisive method of dealing with such cases of delinquency, has been discovered by the wisdom of Parliament, in transferring the power of the local courts, to the higher court of Arches; where a more complete and summary mode of proceeding in ecclesiastical affairs, will subject the offenders to the speedy infliction of merited punishment.

There is perhaps nowhere to be found a more exemplary and well-conducted body of men than the English clergy: a body possessed of more sound and useful learning, more correctness of manners, and generally good deportment, more

active benevolence, more piety and zeal, more devoted loyalty to the sovereign, or more unaffected attachment to their country. Yet, as men possessed of the same common nature, with the laity and people committed to their spiritual charge, they have of course many imperfections to lament, which attach to the best condition of humanity. It will be no wonder, therefore, if under a sense of their deficiencies, they should be ready to make the same allowance, as the Apostle James, "in many things we all offend." * It must be acknowledged also that a few instances of gross immorality will sometimes occur amongst a large body of men, consisting of fifteen or sixteen thousand persons, however correctly and judiciously the bulk of them may conduct themselves. That such transgressions do take place occasionally, should not be thought surprising; and that they should be magnified in amount, and blazoned by the enemies of the Church, "who consider not the beam that is in their own eyes," whilst with so much uncharitable zeal they try to expose "the mote that is in their brother's eye," † for the unhallowed purpose of fixing disgrace upon the clerical body at large, and arraying against them as great a measure of the hatred and contempt of the national mind, as their malevolence can call into action. When the offence is of such a nature as to call for severity, let the transgressor be held up to public censure, that he may be ashamed, and reform

* James iii. 2. † Matt. vii. 1—6.

his vicious conduct; but let not the innocent be identified with the guilty; nor a whole body of men be stigmatized for the faults of a solitary delinquent. 'Fiat justitia, cœlum ruat.'

That amongst so numerous an order as the clergy are, there should be some who are a scandal to their holy profession, may be expected; that there are many whose spirit and character would be materially improved under a more effective system of discipline, the most strenuous advocates of the Church, (and I trust it has few warmer friends than myself, for that friendship has been closely tested,) cannot but acknowledge.

'I am no advocate for a minute and rigid inquiry into the lesser improprieties, or rather inaccuracies, of conduct, into which any member of the clerical profession may fall through inadvertency. Nor would I be rigorously exact in marking every instance in which a clergyman may, in the freedom of conversation, chance to "speak unadvisedly with his lips," and say something not perfectly consistent with the dignity of his office. Still less would I sanction any inquisitorial invasion of the privacy of his own dwelling, or hold up to public censure any of those imperfections or smaller irregularities of character or demeanour, which do not force themselves upon the observation of the public eye. Undoubtedly every clergyman ought to be exemplary in all the relations of life, religious, civil, social, and domestic, in every department of his conduct, in the whole turn and temper of his mind. But I am

speaking now, not of the extent of his responsibility to God, and his own conscience; but of what ought to come under the cognizance and correction of human laws.

Such things as I have just adverted to, are fit subjects for the judicious observation of his clerical friends, or for the admonition of his ecclesiastical superiors; but neither call for, nor ought to be made, the objects of corrective discipline.'

But when a clergyman is chargeable with gross and flagrant immorality, which admits of clear proof, and has been convicted of gross offences, which deprive him of the common rights and immunities of his fellow-subjects, it surely is most desirable that there should be some ready mode of suspending him, or if his offence requires it, of removing him altogether from the profession to which he is a disgrace.

Erroneous doctrines, which have a tendency to undermine the grand foundations of Christianity, should be the especial objects of ecclesiastical censure. "A man that is an heretic," says the inspired apostle, "after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." *

Some errors are fundamental, and absolutely inconsistent with faith in Christ. For pertinaciously maintaining these errors, men, whether they be ecclesiastics or laics, ought to be excom-

* Titus iii. 10, 11.

municated; as much (or more) as for gross immoralities; and were things restored to their primitive state in the Church of Christ; there can be no doubt, but that they who advisedly make light of, or speak against or deny, those fundamental articles of religion, which they are solemnly pledged to teach, such as the lost state of mankind by nature, the deity of Christ, the real atonement of his death, justification by faith in his merits, the need of sanctification by the Holy Spirit, and of obedience to God's commandments, as the effect and evidence of a justifying faith, with other doctrines of similar importance, would, after proper admonition, be rejected by the pastors of the Church, and excluded from the communion of believers; as persons unfit to associate with those who cordially receive and faithfully preach the doctrines of Christianity.*

There have been, and perhaps still are, some learned and ingenious men in the Church, who mistakenly fancy that it is no sin to treat the word of God with neglect, contempt, or proud opposition; and that it is of little consequence what doctrines men believe, in spite of the declarations of Christ, who affirms of himself and his religion, "I am the way, the truth, and the life;"† and in direct repugnance to the eighteenth Article, which maintains, "they also are to be accursed, that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth; so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law,

* Scott on Titus iii. 10, 11. † John xiv. 6.

and the light of nature. For holy scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved." Men holding such tenets ought in common honesty to renounce all connexion with a Church who detests their "damnable heresies;" and thus save their superiors the trouble of expelling them from a sacred office, for which they manifestly declare themselves to be unworthy. The public ought to be spared the pain of seeing such men exercise the functions of clergymen, wherever they can find an opportunity for obtruding their unhallowed and destructive ministrations.

The new 'Act for more effectually enforcing Church discipline' will, I trust, go far to effect the removal of those scandals which have been noticed; but if on trial it should be found insufficient, other enactments should be resorted to, that will prove corrective of the deplored evils. The venerable and pious Bishop Porteus, about thirty-five years ago, felt justified in removing the Rev. Mr. Stone's ab officio et beneficio, for promulgating Socinian tenets. And why should not others, who openly avow their disbelief of Christianity, and the doctrines of the Church of England, meet with similar treatment? So long as laxity of discipline gives shelter to diversity of opinions, false teachers "will creep into the bosom of the Church unawares, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."*

* Jude 4.

The strict enforcement of such salutary control over the conduct and doctrines of the clergy would be productive not only of the greatest advantages to themselves by raising the respectability of the clerical body in the public estimation; but do more towards restoring the established Church itself to that primitive simplicity and order which were the just boast of Christ's Church in its infant apostolical state; when the multitude of them that believed (both among the priests and the people) were of one heart, and of one mind;" * keeping back nothing that was profitable, but testifying both to the Jews and Greeks repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." † And what facilities would such a pure and reformed Church possess for extending the triumphs of Christianity, not only within her own especial province, but throughout her numerous colonies, and the whole pagan world: by banishing erroneous doctrines, vice, and scandalous offences from her bosom, and maintaining the unsophisticated truth "as it is in Jesus." Unanimity in sentiment would be more general amongst the clergy, touching the vital doctrines of the Gospel; greater union in spirit and more effective cooperation would be visible in promoting the glory of the Redeemer's kingdom; infidelity would blush and skulk in secret, and a greater quantity of good, spiritual, moral, and national, would be the obvious result, than we have witnessed since the age

* Acts iv. 31, 32. † Ibid. xx. 20, 21.

of the reformation from papal darkness! And would it be at all visionary to expect that God would be backward to fulfil his promise to a Church invigorated with renewed zeal for the advancement of his glory, by giving her a large accession of genuine converts? "Then would the Spirit of God be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest." *

Then Jehovah will encourage the Church, by saying, "Fear not, O Jacob, my servant, and thou Jesurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit on thy seed, and my blessing on thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows among the water courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." †

Until such a revival of christian spirit, doctrine, discipline, and practice, shall prevail amongst bishops, priests, and deacons, it will be in vain to look for a large measure of the divine blessing on our ministrations; and if those, to whom it properly appertains to effect such a correction of tangible abuses, and to infuse such a vigorous and devout animus into the Church, shrink back from the discharge of this necessary duty, from timidity

* Isaiah xxxiii. 15. † Ibid. xliv. 2—5.

or self-interest; then the great head of the church militant and triumphant, will either raise up other instruments better adapted to accomplish the work of purification, or at his appearance in millenial glory, will hallow his own temple once more, by forcibly ejecting from it those who wickedly desecrate it to unholy and secular purposes; "saying to them," in a tone of indignant, though of just rebuke, "it is written, my house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."*

The Church itself ardently sighs for the restoration of that corrective and punitive control, which she ought to possess over her ministers and members generally, saying in her commination service, "Brethren, in the primitive Church there was a godly discipline, that, at the beginning of Lent, such persons as stood convicted of notorious sin were put to open penance, and punished in this world, that their souls might be saved in the day of the Lord; and that others, admonished by their example, might be the more afraid to offend. Instead whereof, (until the said discipline may be restored again, which is much to be wished) it is thought good, that at this time (in the presence of you all) should be read the general sentences of God's cursing against impenitent sinners gathered out of the seven and twentieth chapter of Deuteronomy, and other places of scripture; and that ye should answer to every sentence, Amen; to the

* Matt. xxi. 12, 13.

intent, that being admonished of the great indignation of God against sinners, ye may the rather be moved to earnest and true repentance; and may walk more warily in these dangerous days; fleeing from such vices, for which ye affirm with your own mouths the curse of God to be due."*

The laws and canons formerly made for the government of the Church, and the regulation of its momentous concerns, are now found to be in a very uncertain and unsatisfactory state. The materials of which several of them are composed, are heterogeneous;—their operation upon the consciences and practice of the clerical body, is vague, undefined, and uncertain; and consequently their authority is often nugatory, and of no efficacy whatever. As the clergy constitute what may in some respects be considered a distinct body in the state, with particular duties, and peculiar immunities and privileges, it would, at first consideration, be natural to suppose that they are governed by a distinct code of laws, relating to their own proper functions. In the military profession, this is known to be the case; for the army is governed by laws framed for that specific purpose, under the title of Articles of War. It is also taken for granted, by the discerning part of the public, that the Church is governed by a similar code adapted to the just regulation of its affairs. But this is not strictly true; for although it has laws and canons for the avowed object of governing the clergy, yet they

* Commination Service of the Church of England.

are frequently of little or no avail for controlling that great body, whose conduct they affect to regulate. So that they may be likened to a mere carcase, without a soul to animate it,—to an inert body, destitute of a head, to direct its operations. Archdeacon Sharpe, after complaining of these difficulties and perplexities, adduces some instances to show, how the canons sometimes "contradict or interfere with the laws of the state." The immediate inference from which should seem to be, that they ought, in all cases, to be literally conformed to. And yet, if we should lay this down, as an invariable or indispensable rule of practice, as matters now stand with us, in all cases to pay a literal obedience to the canons, we should soon find ourselves so entangled, and beset with difficulties, as would puzzle both professions of the law, as well as our own, to extricate us out of it. And then he argues, that the clergy have a tacit dispensation for not following the letter of the canon in all points, when the proper guardians or conservators of the ecclesiastical laws are known to be consenting to our departure from the letter of the canon, on presumption, that we answered the principal end and intention of them some other way."* Afterwards he says, "the canons were framed suitably to the particular principles, discipline, and customs of that age in which they were set forth. The reasons of some injunctions have now ceased. The use and fitness of others now

* Sharpe on the Rubrics and Canons, p. 106.

no longer appeareth. And what might be decent then, and pass well, would seem now, after almost a century and a half, through gradual change of customs, strangely antique and unbecoming."*

'Laws, as all other things human, are many times full of imperfection, and that which is supposed behoveful unto men, proveth oftentimes most pernicious. The wisdom which is learned by tract of time, findeth the laws that have been established in former ages, needful in latter to be abrogated. Besides, that which sometimes is expedient, doth not always continue so; and the number of needless laws unabolished, doth weaken the force of them that are necessary.'†

Surely then this imperfect and anomalous state of things ought not to be suffered to continue any longer. 'The ecclesiastical law of the kingdom ought not to be permitted to remain in this state of uncertain obligation, of inextricable entanglement, of obsoleteness and desuetude;' but should undergo a careful revision, with a view to such enactments for the regulation of the conduct of the clergy, as shall be more completely adapted to the present difficult position and exigencies of the established Church; for an obsolete law is a dead letter, which no man is very solicitous to observe, or afraid to violate.

'The compilation of a body of ecclesiastical law, was it seems, very early deemed essential to the completion of the Reformation of religion in

* Archdeacon Sharpe's Charge, 1738.

† Hooker's Eccl. Polity, Fourth Book, p. 122.

this kingdom. Accordingly, in the reigns of Henry the Eighth, and Edward the Sixth, attempts were made to effect this important object, but they were rendered abortive by various circumstances opposing the design. In the reign of Elizabeth, a last effort was made in the year 1571, to give to this 'Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum,' the sanction of Parliament. Such a body of laws to succeed to the old ones, had been many years desired by the learnedest and best men of the reformed religion. A committe was therefore appointed for redress of sundry defects in religion. But instead of reviewing and furthering the establishment of this excellent and elaborate book, the Parliament fell rather upon examining other matters of religion already established, which gave the Queen great offence.' *

Those alterations in our ecclesiastical laws which were then deemed expedient by the guardians of the Church, are thought to be increasingly necessary now, by every well-affected member of the Church, for the promotion of true piety, and the maintenance of order, and good conduct amongst the clergy.

The times in which we live are highly favourable to the undertaking. We have both prelates and civilians admirably qualified for the task of carrying into effect, so important and beneficial a measure. That the Church and State may be stimulated to the prompt and decided performance

* Strype's Life of Parker.

of this admitted duty, from a consideration of the advantage which will result from its completion, and the great danger of deferring and neglecting it, let them ponder the declaration of Saint James; "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin;"* for which he is deeply responsible at the tribunal of God.

* James iv. 17.

CHAPTER XIX.

A DISSERTATION ON THE OXFORD "TRACTS FOR THE TIMES," SHEWING THEIR ANTISCRIPTURAL NATURE, AND IRRELIGIOUS AND IMMORAL TENDENCY.

"BUT THERE WERE FALSE PROPHETS ALSO AMONG THE PEOPLE, EVEN AS THERE SHALL BE FALSE TEACHERS AMONG YOU, WHO PRIVILY SHALL BRING IN DAMNABLE HERESIES, EVEN DENYING THE LORD THAT BOUGHT THEM, AND BRING UPON THEMSELVES SWIFT DESTRUCTION. AND MANY SHALL FOLLOW THEIR PERNICIOUS WAYS; BY REASON OF WHOM THE WAY OF TRUTH SHALL BE EVIL SPOKEN OF. AND THROUGH COVETOUSNESS SHALL THEY WITH FEIGNED WORDS MAKE MERCHANDISE OF YOU: WHOSE JUDGMENT NOW OF A LONG TIME LINGERETH NOT, AND THEIR DAMNATION SLUMBERETH NOT." 2 PETER II. 1—10.—"WHOSE MOUTHS MUST BE STOPPED—WHEREFORE REBUKE THEM SHARPLY, THAT THEY MAY BE SOUND IN THE FAITH—NOT GIVING HEED TO JEWISH FABLES, AND COMMANDMENTS OF MEN THAT TURN FROM THE TRUTH." TITUS I. 11—15.

ERROR is a poisonous plant, that grows and flourishes, both in an indigenous and exotic soil. In some regions it runs wild, and attains to great luxuriance; in others, it is more domesticated and restrained from its natural tendency to rankness and exuberance, by judicious laws and restrictions. In all cases, however, it is the spontaneous produce of the fallen heart of man. Ever since the defection of our first parents, a restless desire has prevailed in the bosom of their descendants,

to "eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil;" though it has been prohibited to them as well as their progenitors: * and thus affecting to be as gods, and "wise above what is written," "they have been lifted up with pride, and have fallen into the condemnation of the devil." †

These remarks will satisfactorily account for the origin of heresy and error, and all the mischievous effects which they have produced in the world. From the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, to the lying suggestions of the false prophets, under the Old Testament,—from the vain glosses of the law, and the fabulous traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees, to the deceptive wonders of Simon Magus ‡ and Elymas the sorcerer,§—from "the profane and vain babblings of Hymenæus and Philetus, whose word will eat as doth a canker," to the antichrist's in St. John's day, ‖—from the rudimental existence of "the man of sin," the son of perdition, in the womb of time, to his infancy, childhood, adolescency, maturity, and acme, as described by the inspired Apostle Paul,¶ to the heresies of the Cerinthians, Ebionites, and Gnostics,—from the fundamental errors of Sabellius, Arius, and Socinus, down to the full development of "the mystery of iniquity; even that wicked one, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them

* Gen. iii. 1—6. † 1 Tim. iii. 6. ‡ Acts viii. 9, 25.
§ Acts xiii. 8, 13. ‖ 1 John ii. 18—24. ¶ 2 Thess. ii. 1—13.

that perish," *—from the dark and monastic ages, and the horrible gloom which attended them, down to the usurped and unscriptural, and pernicious system of Puseyism and its abettors, the tractators,—the origin of all their errors may be traced to a vain ambition of being "as gods," and the indulgence of that pride and intellectual conceit, which make their possessors the sport of the prince of darkness, and the most unruly passions. "And forasmuch as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, he gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." † "Because they received not the truth in the love of it, that they might be saved; therefore God hath sent them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned, (if they repent not,) who believe not the revealed truth of God, but have pleasure in unrighteousness." ‡

But after all, who is Dr. Pusey, Professor of Hebrew and Canon of Christchurch, Oxford? Who is Dr. Keble, late Professor of Poetry in that University? and Mr. Newman, Fellow of Oriel College, that they should have the temerity "to defy the armies of the living God," and insult all Christendom with impunity? That they are men gifted with a share of natural talents, for which they are responsible as well as others,—that they possess a competent knowledge of classics, and sciences, and history, and scholastic divinity, it

* 2 Thess. ii. 13. † Rom. i. 28. ‡ 2 Thess. ii. 10—13.

would be unreasonable to deny: but are they such prodigies of wisdom as to monopolize all the erudition and knowledge of Cambridge and Oxford, and Christendom, that they should assume the office of teachers, ex cathedra, and dictate a system of spurious theology for the adoption of the Universities, and the whole Church of Christ in her collective capacity?

Before, however, we give ourselves implicitly up to the direction of these self-assuming guides, we must consult the word of God, and freely examine their pretensions to the honours, which they proudly arrogate to themselves. The oracles of eternal wisdom thus instruct me, and all mankind. "If there arise among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder; and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shall not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet, or dreamer of dreams shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee. If thy brother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is

as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, let us go, and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; namely of the gods of the people, which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth, even unto the other end of the earth; thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him: neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: but thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people, because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord, thy God. And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and do no more any such wickedness as this is among you."*

Jesus Christ, the infallible head of the Church, thus addresses us on the same subject, to guard us against impostors. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." † According to these divine maxims, we have an indis-

* Deut xiii. 1—12. † Matt. vii. 15—20.

putable right to ask for, and inspect, the credentials of the tractators. We have a right to inquire, whether they have received a commission to preach their new-fangled system, "from heaven, or of men?" If they arrogantly say, "from heaven," we will reject their testimony, unless they can fairly exhibit "some of those things which Christ hath wrought by them, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, as seals of their apostleship in the Lord."* Or "if they say of men," fallible as themselves, amidst all their boast of infallibility, we will disdain their authority; because, like the lying prophets of old, they run without being sent. God indignantly complains of their wicked intrusion into his sanctuary, and threatens to visit the offence with his hottest displeasure. If Uzzah was smitten because he laid unhallowed hands on the ark, will not their presumption be punished, who seek to turn away the people from the service of the King of Glory, to worship the vanities of the idolatrous Church of Rome? "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied." † "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God: because ye have spoken vanity and seen lies, therefore am I against you, saith the Lord God. And mine hand shall be upon the prophets, that see vanity, and that divine lies; they shall

* Rom. xv. 18, 19. † 1 Cor. ix. 2. Jer. xxiii. 21.

not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord God."*

We will not, however, be so uncharitable as to pass an unqualified sentence of condemnation, upon the Oxford tract writers, before we have candidly examined the doctrines contained in their documents, and ascertained their tendency and design. But if after such an investigation fairly conducted, by the decisions of scripture, and the Church, and the united testimony of the best and wisest Christian Fathers, the doctrines they inculcate, shall convict their authors of heresy and delusion; whatever may be the result, we shall not fail to declare, after every allowance for their learning, that the boasted "light which is within them, is gross and fatal darkness; and, oh, how great is that darkness!"†

I must however premise, that the commencement of the present century has given birth to errors in religion, which, if left to work a silent progress, unchecked by proper authority, are likely to bring about an awful crisis in the Church of England. 'In these last and perilous times,' certain men, prompted by a false and unhallowed 'zeal, not according to knowledge,' have arisen in in the bosom of one of our universities, denying, or explaining away, the sacred verities of the

* Ezek. xiii. 7—10. † Matt. vi. 23.

Christian religion, and avowing sentiments utterly repugnant to the articles, homilies, and creeds of the church, subversive of the principles of Protestantism, and calculated (if allowed to prevail) to bring the nation back to the errors of Romanism, which it solemnly abjured, at the grand era of the Reformation, on account of its monstrous delusions. Taking advantage of the laxity of ecclesiastical discipline, and indulging ultra notions of Church government, they have artfully contrived to foist upon us the wildest delusions, which have been greedily swallowed by some, who will not "hold fast the form of sound words, which they have been taught, and therefore have been given over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."*

As novelty and error are much more congenial to the taste of fallen creatures than truth, with all its lovely attractions; I feel no surprise that such pestilential notions should have been widely diffused amongst the junior members of the clerical body, and some others, from whom we expected better things. Nor can I conceal my deliberate conviction, that such perverted men are employed as instruments by Satan, "to vex the Church of Christ, by trying to 'fasten on its neck, the intolerable yoke of Popery,' which neither we nor our forefathers could bear. †

That such heterodox notions should have arisen in the heart of the renowned University of Ox-

* 2 Tim. i. 13. † Acts xv. 10.

ford, which "is set for the defence of the truth, as it is in Jesus," I most unfeignedly deplore. Such an event happening in the nineteenth century, after the establishment of Christianity, and in a place dedicated to the culture of sound learning, affords lamentable proof to my mind of the baneful effects of mere human literature and attainments; for when they are not sanctified by the grace of God, they too frequently turn out to be a real curse (as in the present instance) to their possessors. It is no marvel, that the inspired Apostle, who was not destitute of a large portion of learning,* seeing the unhallowed abuse made of it by some members of the Corinthian and Colossian Churches, should have cautioned the latter, "to beware lest any man should spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ," † and should have said to the literati of the former, "we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge (unsanctified by grace,) puffeth up (with vain conceit and self-sufficiency) but charity (connected with christian knowledge) edifieth."‡ Here then a sufficient cause is assigned for the anomaly—namely, that the most pernicious heresies in the Church militant, and the most absurd theories and opinions have, in all ages, been the common offspring of learning, when prostituted to secular objects, instead of being employed as it should be, as an

* Gal. i. 14. † Col. ii. 8. ‡ 1 Cor. viii. 1.

auxiliary for the defence, and the propagation of divine truth. The erroneous system developed in the Oxford Tracts, dictates to both universities,* and to the Church likewise, the necessity of an enlarged scriptural education for their respective members; for until some such course of instruction in divinity, as I have recommended for adoption, be resorted to, to guard them against the seductions of false teachers, "they will be as children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."†

On a candid examination of the Oxford Tract doctrines, by the light of scripture, and the standard articles of the Church of England, supported by the suffrages of its best and most learned divines, it will be no difficult task to prove, that they are utterly irreconcileable to the word of God, repudiated by the Church as blasphemous conceits, and altogether indefensible on the ground of their religious and moral tendency.

It is not consistent with the plan of this work to give an elaborate exposure of that system. I must content myself with briefly noticing its most prominent errors, and referring the reader to some of those publications which have more fully

* I am truly rejoiced to find that a meeting has been convened at Cambridge, to devise an improved system of religious education for its members. I sincerely hope my own Alma Mater will follow the laudable example, and thus afford a better security against the seductive errors by which so many are in danger of being "drowned in destruction and perdition." † Eph. iv. 14.

exhibited it in all its native deformity and guilt.*

1. I begin with Tradition, and the opinion of some of the Fathers, which the Tract writers unduly exalt to the exclusive office of true interpreters of the sacred oracles; so that what they affirm must be unhesitatingly taken as the proper sense of scripture, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice. If these supposed plenary inspired persons, Tradition, and a few of the ancient Fathers, assert, on their own ipse-dixit, that such and such a thing is truth, though it should be ever so much opposed to the solemn verities of God, then scripture must be stript at once of its authority, and bow implicitly to the decisions of tradition, which may be true or false.

Does such a wild conceit of the value of tradition honour God, and his sacred word, "which is given by inspiration, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness?" or does it blasphemously derogate from his glory, by preferring the fallible and erroneous opinions of deceived men, to his infallible and incontrovertible testimony? A mere babe in sound theology, or the most unlettered man, possessed of common sense and piety, will tell the tractators that such unwarrantable notions have no other origin than the wisdom of the Romish Church, and are altogether "earthly,

‡ Dr. Shuttleworth of Oxford. Bishop M'Ilvaine, of America, and several others. Also the charges to the Clergy of the Diocese of Chester, and those of other Bishops.

sensual, and devilish;" * notions which are not only at direct variance with scripture itself, which they put on a level with, and sometimes considerably below, tradition, and the decisions of the Church of Christ universally; but are contrary to the sober judgment of every sound Protestant divine throughout the whole length and breadth of christendom.

As to the Fathers, whose judgment and traditions, are to determine our faith, and settle our religious creed, they will not appear infallible guides, whom we may safely follow, if their conflicting opinions, on cardinal points of the gospel, be duly examined by the candid reader, who will take the trouble to read the Ecclesiastical Histories of Mosheim and Milner. There, and in other records of the first five centuries† of the Christian Church, they will learn "to call no man master, in the absolute sense of the expression on earth," but travel with them in the road to celestial bliss, no further, than they follow Christ, who is exclusively the "way, the truth, and the life," to happiness and heaven. Let us call to remembrance the wise saying or aphorism of Chillingworth, one of the greatest champions of the Christian religion, 'that the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants,' although the Pope, and his compeers, the Tractators may foolishly dispute it.

Nevertheless, how does God treat the preten-

* James iii. 15.

† See a sensible Pamphlet by Baptist Noel, A.M. entitled 'The First Five Centuries of the Church, or the Early Fathers no safe guides.'

sions of such men as these writers of 'Tracts for the Times?' Does he look at their effrontery as a venial offence, which their father, the Pope, can easily absolve? No; he denounces it as a sin that, without forgiveness from himself, will involve those, who set up their own fancies and traditions, in the place of his infallible word, in darkness and everlasting death. He says, and most solemnly too, that, in all matters of doctrine and precept, in everything pertaining to salvation "in this life and that which is to come," we must make a direct and exclusive appeal to his written word, and nothing else, to ascertain his revealed will concerning us; "to the law and the testimony; if they (men) speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. And when (deceivers) shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and wizards that peep and mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead." * Again; thus saith the Lord, the Head of his spiritual Church: "search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life. And they are they which testify of me.† Thus also speaks his inspired apostle when closing the canon of the inspired volume. "For I testify unto every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book

* Isaiah viii. 19, 20. † John v. 39.

of this prophecy; God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."* I leave these passages of sacred writ, without comment, to produce their genuine effect upon every unprejudiced reader of the work.

But let us "hear the church," and profit by her wise admonitions, which dissuades us from hearkening to Popish Tractators, who would have us put tradition on an equality with the word of the all-wise God. "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."†

As to all of the orthodox Fathers of the first centuries of the Church of Christ, tradition found no place whatever amongst them. Intent on honouring sacred writ, they were afraid of incurring the righteous indignation of the Saviour, who warned them and every successive generation of true Christians, of the daring impiety of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were real fac similes of modern Catholics and Puseyites, in the following stringent terms: "Then came to Jesus Scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders, for they wash not their hands when they eat bread? But he answered and said unto them,

* Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

† Sixth Article of the Church of England.

Why do ye transgress the commandment of God by your tradition; for God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother; and he that curseth father and mother, let him die the death? But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or mother, It is a gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophecy of you saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." *

The tractators will do well to study the above passage as to its animus and design, and then the whole Babel, whether of Papistical or Jewish tradition, will fall immediately to the ground, which is its proper destiny.

2. The fallacious opinions of the writers of the tracts regarding the virtue of the two sacraments, is equally preposterous with their traditional figments; and totally subversive of piety and godliness; first by erecting the administrators of them to the rank of Popes, and dispensers, ad libitum, of spiritual blessings, which God only can bestow. And what is all this, but a revival and republication of the schoolmen's doctrine of the 'opus operatum;' whereby the sacraments become in

* Matt. xv. 1—10.

the opinions of deceived men, the necessary vehicles of grace and salvation, to the recipients of them, be they ever so depraved, both before and after their reception of them, at the hands of false priests? The tractators, like the idolatrous and apostate Church of Rome, ascribe a necessary, unconditional, and unfailing efficacy, to the sacraments,—to support its arrogant, ambitious, blasphemous, and secular claims.

1. In the case of those who submit to the holy rite of Baptism, regeneration, "which is a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness,"* is made necessarily, and ipso facto, to accompany the performance of the commanded ordinance. But is this true, or monstrously false? No sacrament can become efficacious, without the blessing of God who appointed it, upon the proper reception thereof. And that this grace is withheld from millions, who approach the sacred rite, in a careless and irreverent spirit, is evident to a demonstration, in spite of all that Catholic, and Pseudo divines of the Anglican Church maintain to the contrary. Incredible multitudes come away from the holy ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, without being washed from their sins, sanctified in their hearts, or renewed in their lives; because the blessing of the Most High upon them has never been rightly sought, or duly appreciated. I need make but a slight appeal to the spirit and demeanour of many of the partakers of them, in

* Catechism.

confirmation of the melancholy fact. Do no adults (for I put the case of infants out of the question) retire from the font, with the symbolical cross on their foreheads, but with unclean hearts addicted to every species (some more, some less,) of vice and immorality? Do none leave the sacramental table, after unworthily participating of the dying emblems of a Saviour's love, and protesting unshaken allegiance to Him who has bought us with his precious blood, as ripe, or more so, for all impiety and profligacy, and wickedness, as before their reception of them? And is this a proof of the necessary efficacy of the sacraments? I leave Romish divines and English tractators, and false guides, in our own Church, to untie this gordian knot, and get rid of the difficulty, by comments on Scripture misunderstood and perverted to purposes of priestly arrogance and delusion. Oh, my God and Saviour, how long is thine inheritance to be debased by this grievous error? "How long shall thine enemies triumph, and be allowed to utter wicked blasphemy against thee,"* under the specious pretext, "of doing God service?" "Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture" on the important subject of Baptism? With respect to it, does not the Bible as well as the Church of England in all her offices, require true repentance and faith as pre-requisite qualifications in adults, for the worthy reception of the sacred rite? "Philip said unto the eunuch, if thou believest

* Psalm xciv. 1—5.

with all thine heart, thou mayest be baptized. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God;" * the Saviour of my soul from all the penal consequences of sin, both temporal and eternal. Upon this credible and intelligent profession of affiance in Christ, he laved "in the outward sign," and no doubt received the inward and spiritual grace signified by it, namely, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, to illuminate, renew, sanctify, and bless his soul, with the hope of everlasting glory. Here is an all-sufficient cause at work, producing an appropriate effect, worthy of it.

In reference to infants receiving grace in Baptism, the word of God is silent; transferring the management of their initiation into Christ's Church, as in the case of circumcision under the law, to their parents and sponsors, whom it requires (as they are incapable of exercising repentance and faith, and making a voluntary and credible profession for themselves) to present them through the minister of the Gospel, in the spirit of those graces, to Christ; "that he may take them in his arms and bless them," as he did in the days of his personal ministration.†

Let us now hear the Anglican Church, in confirmation of truth, and refutation of the erroneous Popish tractarian scheme. 'We should duly use the Sacraments: and in such only as worthily, rightly, and by faith receive the same, they have

* Acts viii. 35—40. † Matt. xix. 13—16.

a wholesome effect or operation. But they that receive the same unworthily, purchase to themselves damnation, as St. Paul saith." *

That some of the Fathers confounded the sign with the thing signified by it in Baptism, I readily grant. But I must declare, without fear of solid confutation, that "they spake in this matter, unadvisedly with their lips." And I will not, "follow even a learned multitude to do evil," until, what can never occur, I receive an oracular voice from heaven, to justify my acquiescence.

But after all, I will send the hierarchy of the Church of Rome, with the tractators, and mistaken divines, in their rear, to every common ploughboy in the land, for the correction of their error in substituting signs for realities. Would not these simple rustics chastise their egregious folly, by shewing them that there is a wide difference between the coarse sign daubed on a wooden surface, and the profitable and material instrument which they use in the process of cultivating the untractable soil? Extend the remark, if you please, ad infinitum, to almost everything else in nature and grace. Simon Magus,† in the infant Church, inter ceteros, and multitudes ever since, who have received the outward sign in Baptism, to their cost, have not found it necessarily identified with the inward grace signified by it.‡ Theodoret, and a host of orthodox Fathers affirm,

* Article XXV. † Acts viii. 20—24.

‡ See Author's Lectures on Baptism.

gratia aliquando præcedit aliquando sequitur, sed non aliquando sequitur.

2. The same necessary conveyance of grace and salvation is supposed by the tractators, who are indebted to the Church of Rome for the invention, to attend the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The consecratory prayer of the Romish priest, and the tractators, are not far behind them in their extraordinary pretensions, converts without a word from Christ to warrant the assumption, the elements of bread and wine into the real body and blood of Christ. Sound Protestants can never be persuaded to believe all this; though it is a gainful system to the Pope, who does not allow his disciples the right of judging for themselves in matters of faith. The testimony of Scripture and the evidence of our own senses, are quite sufficient, to prove the contrary. The language employed by Christ, does not so much as intimate that there is any peculiar mystery in the sacrament; much less that the elements are transmuted into any different substance, whether material or spiritual, by the act of consecration. "Take, eat, this is my body," or an emblematical and figurative representation of it, "and he took the cup, saying, drink ye all of it; for this is my blood," or a symbolical representation of it, "of the new testament," or covenant, "which is shed for many, for the remission of sins."*

And now what saith the Scripture concerning

* Matt. xxvi. 26—28.

the reception of the Lord's Supper? Does it countenance the Tractarian and Roman notion of its unfailing efficacy? I think it does not; but clearly overthrows it. "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." * And does he not found upon this solemn declaration, the necessity of scrutinizing our spirit and motives, in participating that holy feast; when he says to all communicants, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." †

The Church of England rightly states, that the advantages derived from worthily communicating are indeed great, but gives no license to any man to suppose, that he is benefitted, but quite the contrary, if he approaches the table of the Lord with a faithless and unbelieving heart. Such are the questions she proposes, and the answers returned by her catechumens, when they come to receive the sacrament at the hands of her ministers. 'What is the outward part or sign of the Lord's Supper? Bread and wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received. What is the inward part, or thing signified? The body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper. What are the benefits whereof we are partakers thereby? The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood

* 1 Cor. xi. 27—32. † Ibid. 28.

of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread and wine.' *

'The sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or be carried about, (like the mass, in vain ostentation, and pompous procession, to attract the notice of the vulgar,) but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily, rightly, and by faith receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation; but they that use the same unworthily, purchase to themselves damnation, as St. Paul saith.' †

The Homily on the worthy receiving of the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ,‡ attests in unqualified terms its efficacy, where it is properly received; but asserts its non efficacy, yea, its uselessness to recipients, who celebrate the holy ordinance without the dispositions which it demands.

All the Fathers of the primitive Church, as well as the Reformers of our own from Papal corruptions, maintain the same important truth. Ignatius, Polycarp, and Irenæus, amongst the former in its purest ages; and Luther, and Melancthon, and Beza, and Zuinglius, and Archbishop Cranmer, supported by Latimer, Ridley, Hooper, and a multitude of the great luminaries of the English Church, concur in the same sentiments; and oppose unequivocally the conceits of the tractators. And it is truly marvellous, though intellectual pride will account for the difficulty, that those who

* Church Catechism. † Article XXV. ‡ Homily XV.

are markedly their inferiors in grace, in biblical and sound learning, should have ventured to differ so widely from their superiors, who sat at Christ's feet that they might attain salvation, and be duly qualified to instruct their flocks how to secure everlasting life.

3. The doctrine of justification by faith in the atonement and righteousness of Christ, appeared to be of such vast importance to our venerable Reformers, that they designated it by the title of 'Articulus Ecclesiæ stantis vel cadentis.' In all their attacks upon "that wicked one, the man of sin," the Pope, (and not Luther as Catholics impudently pretend,) they used this formidable weapon with signal success, to oppose the errors of the Church of Rome.* And this encomium is justly bestowed on the doctrine of justification by faith; for it is unanswerably true, that where faith in Christ for acceptance with God is inflexibly maintained in our writings and pulpit discourses, there the dignity and true Protestant bearing of the Church of England is fully supported, and true piety, and holiness, and virtue, as a necessary consequence, flourish in our congregations: but where that fundamental Article of the Christian religion, is openly or covertly denied,—where it is withheld or meagrely exhibited,

* Luther's Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, 2 vols. duodecimo, is a work necessary to be read in these times, and to be well digested by every biblical student, as a powerful antidote against the delusive errors of Romanism, and the absurdities of the Tractarians.

or explained away, there the church sinks into a Popish spirit of self-righteousness, dishonours Christ by perverting his Gospel; and the people, indulging in extravagant opinions of human merit, rob the Redeemer of his peculiar glory, by making themselves the saviours of their own souls, instead of Him who vindicates this office, as expressly belonging to himself. "I am," says the Son of God, "the way, (exclusively,) the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me."*

Now the tractators, whose object is to make our beloved Church a part and parcel of the Romish Church, have fallen into the same capital error with it, on the cardinal point of justification by faith; and would to heaven that those illustrious Bishops Horsley and Porteus, Horne and Hall, and several others like-minded with themselves who are gone to heaven to receive a gracious reward, had had no cause to complain of some heterodox divines in their day, who were guilty of a similar offence against "the truth as it is in Christ."†

However the tractators, if I do not greatly wrong them, like their progenitors of the Catholic Church, and its present supporters, assert two separate justifications, instead of one. The first taking place in baptism, which is their panacea for every spiritual disorder of fallen man, because they know of no other equally efficacious; the second subsequently, in the after stages of the Christian course.

* John xiv. 6. † See their Charges to their Clergy.

Holy Scripture gives not the least countenance whatever to such a wild conceit; for it avows but one act of justification of which God is the sole author, and tells us that it takes place, not necessarily at baptism, in our infancy, as visionaries pretend, but on our repentance and conversion. Were I called upon to define what I mean by evangelical "justification unto eternal life," I should state it to be, 'a judicial act of God, whereby he gratuitously and solely for the merits of Christ, absolves a penitent sinner from all his offences, accounts him righteous, restores him to his royal favour, gives him a legal title to heaven, and bestows upon him the grace of sanctification, and thus enables him during his pilgrimage state, "to be careful to maintain good works, which are profitable to men;"* whilst they glorify God, by attesting the existence and reality of a justifying faith unto salvation.' Will the tractators tell me that all this, and a great deal more, takes place in infant baptism? I deny their position, and call upon them for scriptural and experimental proofs of their affirmation.

The term justification is of forensical extraction, and is used in courts of civil justice, to denote the honorable acquittal of a person, against whom a charge of criminality had been falsely advanced. But as a theologian, I have only to deal with the term in the evangelical sense above given, which is diametrically opposed to the legal sense of the expression.

Now for scriptural proofs of the truth of our

* Titus iii. 8.

statements. "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" Who, whether it be Satan, or the Pope or the Tractators who are his true representatives on earth, when they are divested of their falsely assumed infallibility, can lodge a second accusation, or bring in another bill of indictment against those happy souls, whose privilege it is to be justified and absolved of God? "Who shall separate them from the love of their Saviour Christ; for it is he that died to redeem them, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, and ever liveth to make intercession for them?" * To shew who they are, to whom he freely, and without money or price, accords the inestimable benefit, his inspired apostle says, "to him that worketh not" (to deserve the grace of condignity by means of penance, and fasting, and purgatory, or any other work of imperfect creatures) "but believeth on God that justifieth the ungodly," (on his repentance and belief,) "his faith is counted for righteousness." † "God is the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." ‡ "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." § "I will raise

* Rom. viii. 33—39. † Ibid. iv. 5. ‡ Ibid. iii. 26.
§ Ibid. v. 1—12.

unto David a righteous branch. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is the name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness."* "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him," (as the Pope, and his compeers the tractators are,) shall be ashamed." "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and besides me there is no Saviour. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." †

"The Man of Sin," who blasphemously assumes the emphatic epithet of "his holiness," the incommunicable name of God, may oppugn this consolatory truth, for certain secular purposes; but Protestants, who are conscious of their unholiness, and deplore it, will conjointly, with the royal prophet, exult everlastingly in the benefits conferred by a justifying Redeemer; and say, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom deckeh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."‡ But as his highness, the Pope, and his emissaries, are in great danger of not fully comprehending the meaning of these inimitable figures of divine realities,§ I will intro-

* Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. † Isa. xlv. 21—25. ‡ Ibid. lxi. 10.

§ I recommend to the perusal of the scriptural student, the invaluable work of Jones of Nayland, on the figurative language of Scripture.

duce them to the exalted, though explicit anthem of beatified spirits, "a cloud of true witnesses,"* as numerous as the drops of rain, which descend from heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." † And why all this exultation among all the hierarchy, and the glorified inhabitants, of the celestial kingdom? Listen attentively to the primordial and immediate cause of it, O England, Rome, and all the world; "Unto Jesus Christ who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests, unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."‡

Hearken now to the friendly voice of the Church of England, in confirmation (though it needs none) of the Holy Scripture, and refutation of Popery, and 'the writers of the Tracts for the Times,' (oh unhappy times) who follow the same delusive course." "We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works and deservings. Wherefore that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as is more largely expressed in the Homily of Justification."§

With respect to that Homily, were all the quotations cited that bear decidedly on the point, the whole of it must be adduced. ‖

* Heb. xii. 1. † Rev. v. 12. ‡ Ibid. xv. 6. § Article XI.
‖ Hooker's Sermon on Justification.

The Fathers of the Primitive, as well as those of the Reformed Church of Christ, all concur in bearing a voluntary testimony to the necessity of justification by faith. Must I reiterate the names of Ignatius, and Polycarp, and Irenæus, and Chrysostom, and Origen, and Jerome, *inter multos ceteros;* and Luther, and Cranmer, and Ridley, and Hooper, and Latimer, and Hooker,* and Faber, and Scott, and Doddridge, M'Ilvaine,† and a multitude of others, who treat lucidly on the all-important subject?

4. I can only give a cursory glance at the other unscriptural tenets of these Roman Catholic divines. They assert, on their own *ipse dixit,* 'that the sacraments, not preaching the Gospel, are the only means of grace."

Christ directly refutes their preposterous error, by seizing every opportunity of "preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye, and believe the Gospel." ‡

He gave a solemn commission to his apostles to do the same important work. And he said, when he had completed his divine mission, and left them to propagate his righteous cause throughout the earth; "Go ye into all the world, and preach the

* The Book of Homilies, notwithstanding the antiquated style in which it is written, should be devoutly read by every family in the British nation.

† See Bishop M'Ilvaine on "Justification by Faith," in answer to the Oxford Divinity, a book which deserves to be read for its piety, ability, and unanswerable defence of Protestantism.

‡ Mark i. 15.

Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." If the proper reception of divine truth, through the ministry of the apostles, was to be attended with such blessedness, and the rejection of their message with damnation, is it conceivable that preaching is either unnecessary, or unimportant, as a divinely appointed means of salvation?

St. Paul affirms in contradiction of the Tractarians, that "Christ sent him on a mission to the Gentile world, not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."* I thank God, that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say I had baptized in my own name."† Had baptism been essential to salvation, would it have been matter of thanksgiving that he had not more frequently attended to the discharge of that duty; or at least had preferred it to preaching "the cross of Christ, which is the power of God, and the wisdom of God, for the salvation of sinners."‡

Had the publication of "the glad tidings of the Gospel" been of no consequence, or even of secondary importance, would not the seventy disciples,§ as well as the apostles, in obedience to the command of Christ, have acted unwisely, to say the least, in travelling through the length and breadth of the world, to make it known? And would it have been no impeachment of the wisdom of the Son of God, to have sent them on so foolish and unprofitable an errand?

* 1 Cor. i. 17. † Ibid. 14—17 § Ibid. 24. § Luke x. 1—12.

Would St. Paul have charged Timothy, Bishop of Crete, "to preach the word; be instant in season, and out of season; to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine;" if by so doing he would have engaged in an unprofitable work? And does not that apostle assign the necessity of so doing, by pointing to the corrupt church, of which the Tractators are real members, when he adds, "for the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."*

The ostensible reason why the sacraments are preferred by these heresiarchs, to the important duty of preaching "the" word of life, the Gospel of our salvation is, because it erects them into all the priestly arrogance of so many Popes, to enable them with more facility to dispense, as they wickedly imagine, salvation or damnation, at their discretion. This is one of the most blasphemous and tyrannical usurpations that ever afflicted the human species. This is a fiction of which none but "the father of lies, and his vicar on earth, could have been the authors."

5. Another soul-destroying delusion of the Tractarians is the assertion 'that pardon of sin cannot be obtained, but in baptism, and that they who commit iniquity after the observance of that rite,

* 2 Tim. iv. 1—5.

cannot be forgiven without a dispensation from Rome, for that special purpose.' This is a daring invasion of the prerogative of God, and makes him a liar, by asserting what he positively denies.

The Jews had been circumcised, by divine appointment, which rite answered in its nature and tendency to baptism, under the Christian economy. They sinned grievously against the majesty of heaven, by the violation of their national covenant with him, which bound them to worship and serve him only;* and not to turn aside to the idols and vanities of the heathen. After the commission of this base and ungrateful revolt, of which he loudly complains in the following terms: "Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters, they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward;"† he invites them to a conference; in order to confer pardoning mercy upon them, at the very moment of their repentance and amendment: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."‡

When the Jewish nation added to their other offences against God, the almost inexpiable sin of crucifying Christ, the Lord of Glory, they were

* Exod. xix. 5, 6. † Isaiah i. 3, 4. ‡ Ibid. i. 16—20.

not to be totally abandoned to despair; but the apostles were directed first of all to seek out the lost sheep of the house of Israel, that they might be saved by that very divine Being, whose blood they had cruelly shed. "And Jesus said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead, the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."* And what was the happy result of the faithful execution of this heavenly commission, by St. Peter? 'Three thousand souls, at the preaching of the apostle, when he set forth the heinous character of their crime in crucifying Jesus, were pricked with the deepest remorse and compunction of heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, men, and brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."† Thus, we see a considerable number of Jews, who, after they had submitted to the rite of circumcision, and most probably to the initiatory baptism of John, imbrued

* Luke xxiv. 47. † Acts ii. 37—47.

their guilty hands in the blood of the innocent Jesus, and yet obtained forgiveness unto eternal life.

I know the Pope and his cardinals and their coadjutors are able to disbelieve or explain away this fact, by having recourse to their favourite book tradition, to which the revelation of heaven must bow with due respect and submission. This chicanery, however it may subserve the cause of "evil men and seducers, who shall wax worse and worse, deceiving others, and being deceived themselves by Satan," * will not satisfy upright believers in Christ, who wish "to hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering." †

The tractarian notion is at variance with other striking passages of holy writ. Hear the proclamation of pardon made by the King of kings, and Lord of lords, to every rebel who is willing to avail himself of his clemency. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." ‡ Again, at the moment of repentance, whether before or after

* 2 Tim. iii. 13. † Heb. x. 19—24. ‡ Isa. lv. 6—10.

Baptism, God says, "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." *

The penitent thief on the cross, who had not most probably been baptized, when dying, prayed, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom;" and obtained an assurance of immediate mercy and everlasting felicity, through faith in the merits of Christ; who said unto him, "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." †

The Sixteenth Article of the Church of England reprobates the tractarian notion, which cruelly dooms the sinner, however he may mourn for sin, 'to wear doubt's galling chain' for life; and gives him no hope of securing mercy, unless he obtain it, through the fiction of a purgatorial fiery process, the vain dream of impostors. 'Not every deadly sin committed after Baptism, is sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after Baptism. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we may rise again, and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned, which say, they can no more sin, as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.' ‡

* Ezek. xviii. 27. † Luke xxiii. 42, 43. ‡ Article XVI.

Several of the Homilies, such as the third, thirteenth, and the twentieth, proclaim forgiveness to them that believe in Christ for salvation.

And which of the orthodox Fathers, ancient or modern, ever denied to the contrite, the consolatory assurance of the forgiveness of their sins, when with a true heart, and unfeigned repentance they turn to God? Has it not always been the darling topic of the faithful ambassadors of Jesus, to proclaim with an inspired Apostle, "that God is in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing to men their trespasses when they repent; and hath committed to them the word of reconciliation." *

The invention of so desponding a system belongs to Rome and her adherents; but is utterly abhorrent to God, and his blessed Son, as well as to all the faithful members of the Church militant and triumphant; who declare with one voice, "There is forgiveness with the Lord, and with him is plenteous redemption. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy." †

6. The tract writers have the assurance to assert, that ministers in the apostolical succession, to which they lay exclusive claim for themselves, and the idolatrous Church of Rome, have "the keys of heaven and hell entrusted to them;"

* 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. † Micah vii. 18—20.

which vests them with a discretionary power to open heaven for the admission of whomsoever they please into the kingdom of light and glory; and for rejecting the entrance of any persons into it, whom they choose to reprobate. They found the exercise of such a privilege, upon the authority with which the Apostle Peter was invested by his divine Lord, in the following declaration,—"I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."* Peter had spoken, (or made a confession of faith in Christ,) in the name of his brethren and co-adjutors, as well as in his own; and doubtless this authority related to them also, and not exclusively to himself. But he might be especially addressed, as he first preached the Gospel, after Christ's ascension; first to the Jews, and afterwards to the Gentiles; thus opening the kingdom of heaven, as it were, to them both, in which it was impossible that any successor, whether the Pope or his clergy, could share with them.

Keys were an ancient emblem of civil authority, as we learn from Isaiah xxii. 22; and of spiritual power, as exercised by Christ himself in virtue of his omniscience, and complete acquaintance with the secrets of all hearts. "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and

* Matt. xvi. 15—19.

of death." * "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the keys of David; he that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth." †

The expression, "the keys of the kingdom of heaven," doubtless immediately related to the authority by which the apostles were employed, as the representatives of Christ, or principal members of his celestial kingdom. They were endued with the Holy Spirit, that they might infallibly declare his truth to mankind, and determine what was binding on the conscience, and what not; to shew what persons ought to be admitted into the Church, or excluded from it; to decide on the character of those, whose sins were forgiven, or the contrary; and "whatever in these, and similar respects, they bound on earth, would be bound in heaven, and whatsoever they loosed on earth, would also be loosed in heaven."

The Apostles themselves had not an infallible insight into the characters of men, and they were liable to mistakes and imperfections, as is manifest from the evangelic history, in their own conduct. But they were infallibly preserved from error, in stating the way of acceptance and salvation, the rule of Christian obedience, the believers character and experience, and the final doom of unbelievers, hypocrites, and apostates. In all such things their decision was absolute, and ratified in the court of heaven, as all those will find at last,

* Rev. i. 17, 18. † Rev. iii. 7. John xx. 19—24.

who now despise it. In this respect their apostolical authority continues in the faithful Church of Christ, in its doctrines, as transmitted to us in the New Testament. But all other ministers, of whatever rank, name, or age, can do no more than declare the doctrine of the apostles on this subject, and apply it to particular cases, by preaching the word, administering divine ordinances, admitting men into the visible Church, or excluding them from it, or by personal encouragement or warning. As far as they proceed according to Scripture, in these things, their decisions are warranted and ratified in heaven, but not when they mistake, either in doctrine, or in its particular application to particular persons or characters. As no man can see another's heart, and as no man hath any inherent power to forgive sin, or the contrary; so all pretensions absolutely to absolve or retain men's sins, claim more than apostolical authority; for surely none will maintain that any man can be made a true believer, or a hypocrite by the erroneous decision of another concerning him.

On what fair ground then, can the man of sin, the son of perdition, "that wicked one," in conjunction with the priests, "whom the Lord will consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming; even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders; and

* See Scott's Commentary on the passage.

with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved;"* vindicate this high prerogative. After this inspired declaration of the impiety of the Pope, and his priests, and colleagues, the Tractators, and the damnable nature of their apostasy, can they scripturally lay claim either to the possession of the keys, or to the power connected with the exercise of them? I know with what consummate impudence they vindicate a right to forgive sins, by their papal indulgencies and masses; but their absolvatory sentence will not be ratified by Christ; but receive from him at last that condign punishment which such wicked assumption demands. Even now such men prove to a demonstration, that they are not the successors of St. Peter, nor imitators of his doctrines and spirit, "but are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."†

We say that Christ hath given his ministers power to bind, to loose, to open, to shut, and that the office of loosing consisteth in this; either, 1. that the minister, by the preaching of the gospel offereth the merits of Christ, and full pardon, to

* 2 Thess. ii. 1, 10. † 2 Cor. xi. 13—16.

such as have lowly and contrite hearts; and do unfeignedly repent themselves; pronouncing unto the same a sure and undoubted forgiveness of their sins, and hope of everlasting salvation: or else, 2. that the same minister, when any have offended their brother's minds, with some great offence or notable and open crime, whereby they have, as it were, banished and made themselves strangers from the common fellowship, and from the body of Christ, then after perfect amendment of such things, doth reconcile them and bring them home again, and restore them to the company and unity of the faithful.—We say also that the minister doth execute the authority of binding and shutting, 1. as often as he shutteth up the gate of the kingdom of heaven against unbelieving or stubborn persons, denouncing unto them God's vengeance, and everlasting punishment,—Or else, 2. when he doth shut them out from the bosom of the Church, by open excommunication. Out of doubt, whatever sentence the minister of God shall give in this sort, God himself doth so well allow it, that whatever here on earth is loosed and bound, God himself will loose, and bind, and confirm the same in heaven.—And touching the keys, wherewith they may either open or shut the kingdom of heaven, we with Saint Chrysostom say, 'they may be the knowledge of the scriptures;' with Tertullian we say, 'the interpretation of the law, (or word of God);' and with Eusebius, we call them 'the word of God.' *

* Bishop Jewel on Matthew.

As well therefore, and with as much or more propriety, may his celestial majesty of China, renowned for his idolatry; and the descendant of the lying impostor Mahomet, the Emperor of Turkey, lay claim to this dispensing power given to the apostles, as the Pope of Rome, and his colleagues the tract writers. They have great need of instruction themselves in the way of righteousness, as well as forgiveness for the blasphemies and idolatries which they constantly perpetrate against the kingdom of heaven, without pretending to be such favourites with God, as to possess a power to remit the transgressions of others.

7. The Tractators who can assert almost any thing, and prove nothing, contend 'that the Church of Rome is the only true and perfect Church on earth; and that all Presbyterian churches, such as the established Church of Scotland, the Dissenting Churches in England, and the Reformed Churches on the continent, are no Churches; consequently their ministers are no ministers, their sacraments are no sacraments, that they are not in covenant with God, and that Christ has not promised to be with them, but with those only who are in the apostolical succession, the Episcopalians

If this be not "the tongue which speaketh proud things," yea blasphemy against the Most High, I know not in what the foul offence consists.

But who gave such fallible men as Dr. Pusey, Dr. Keble, and Mr. Newman a licence to make and unmake Churches at their discretion? One

would have been induced primâ facie, to divine, that these men had been favoured like St. Paul, with being "caught up to the third heaven," and admitted into the council chamber of the Almighty, and had been familiar with all the arcana of the glorified state, before they would have ventured to make such gratuitous and cruel assumptions. But this is not the fact; for with all their pretensions, they have only been in the Vatican, surrounded by his Papal majesty, and his cardinals, and have only catched a goodly portion of their anathematizing spirit, derived from "Satan, their Father, whose works they will do."* They are, however, with all these advantages to boot, in the same condition with the lying prophet, who was gifted with ability to utter predictions which were neither to be fulfilled nor regarded.

Let me tell these insolent ecclesiastics, that "they are all forgers of lies, physicians of no value."† Their tongues are envenomed with wormwood and gall, but all the poison which distils therefrom can only fall innocuously to the ground. The churches they unchristianize, though not absolutely perfect, are certainly all perfection, as to their doctrines and piety, when put in competition with the great scarlet whore, however bedizoned "with purple, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls; for she has a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations, and filthiness of her (spiritual) fornication. And upon

* John viii. 44. † Job xiii. 4.

her forehead is a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and abominations of all the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."*

8. The Church of England, in their judgment, which will only deceive those who "being unstable as water, cannot excel," no where restrains her sons from praying for the departed spirits of their friends; and moreover the Popish mass is a real sacrifice for the quick and dead; as efficacious, I suppose they mean as the piacular atonement of the ever blessed Son of God, "who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, to purge our consciences from dead works to serve the living God."†

Thus the mass, consisting of a wafer, the work of a priestly confectioner, is erected into an idol deity, and put on an equality with Christ's death; and the hood-winked Roman devotee is to worship it, as if it could not only purchase a plenary remission of all sins, however enormous, but had power also to open the kingdom of heaven for his admission. If this be not a verification in all its parts, of the apostolic prediction, then we must wait for a future accomplishment in some one or other, more full of presumptuous blasphemy than the Pope and his English auxiliaries. St. Paul foresaw all this with a prophetic eye, and denounces it with unmea-

* Rev. xvii. 1—7. † Heb. ix. 13, 14.

sured severity. "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

9. These learned Tractators further tell us what we should not have known except they had revealed it, and what, God helping us, we will never credit, 'that it is contrary to scripture to bring forward the atonement explicitly and prominently on all occasions.'

I must take the liberty to tell these wise men of the West; (for they are not, it is manifest, so well instructed in divine truth as the learned magi who were guided by a star in the East, to come to Bethlehem "to worship the new-born king," whom the Tractators grossly insult) that the whole Jewish nation, with Moses, the priests, and Levites, and the princes and all the people, stand convicted by their own shewing, of the very offence which they in their consummate wisdom think it right to denounce. They not only every night and morning offered a lamb, significative of "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,"* not only did they present eucharistic oblations occasionally, in gratitude for mercies received; but presented also piacular victims statedly, and a bullock and heifer annually, and as often as was requisite to make a typical atonement for their transgressions, whether voluntary or involuntary. These were

* John i. 29.

accepted from the offerer when presented in penitence and faith, for the typical removal of his guilt, by transferring it to the innocent victim which was a real type of Christ, the great antitype, bleeding and suffering on the cross for the available expiation of our sins.'*

See the whole nation making a strong declaration of their transgressions and faith in a crucified Redeemer by putting their hands on the head of the appointed sacrifice, confessing their sins and pleading for forgiveness through his blood.

Every time the offerer plunged the fatal knife into the neck of the sacred victim, what did he in effect imply and express by that significant act? Why he acknowledged that his own life had been justly forfeited by sin; but that he hoped to be spared through his substitute presented in his stead.†

When Moses and Aaron sprinkled the blood of the piacular offerings on the clothes and bodies of the worshippers, did not this expressive act speak with a voice loud as thunder, that they were ceremonially and morally unclean, and that that blood was symbolical of their washing it away by a reference to the "blood of Christ, which cleanseth us from all sin."‡ If this were not the object kept in full view, let the Tractators tell me what other end was to be attained by this blood-stained

* Leviticus, passim. † Ibid. i. 4.

‡ 1 John i. 7.—Dr. Outram on Sacrifices, is a book worthy of being studied by every minister who would understand the sacrificial dispensation of the Jewish religion.

exhibition of the sacrificer's garments. Saint Paul, who was an adept in Christian theology, and has more authority with me than five millions of learned men, who have not lighted their torches at the altar of Christ, shall instruct us and all the world with respect to the origin and design of the sacrifices. He thus speaks, not "unadvisedly like them, but soberly and in the fear of God." "For Moses took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, this is the blood of the new testament (or covenant) which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was necessary therefore that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these."*

I pass over the paschal feasts celebrated by Hezekiah, Josiah, and Solomon, who sought to propitiate the favour of God by this national atonement, to come to the solemn supplication of David, "the man after God's own heart," who, when he had sinned almost inexpiably, did not feel so much ashamed of the atonement of the Son of God, as the Tractators do, but gloried in it, as the only mode of securing pardon, sanctification, and peace.

* Heb. ix. 19—25.

"Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." *

Jesus Christ spake of his crucifixion as an adequate atonement, which was to possess such resistless attraction that "all men" in consequence thereof, "should look unto him and be saved. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die." † And he tells us further, in order to exhibit his atoning sacrifice, for the devout contemplation of a fallen world, and for their reconciliation with a just God; "the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and give his life a ransom for many." ‡

St. Paul did not observe equal caution and reserve with the tract writers about the atonement; for gratitude so filled his heart for redeeming love, that he could not help exclaiming to the whole of his Roman converts, that he and others of them were now "justified by the blood of Jesus," and on that account rejoiced "in hope of the glory of God." § I have no doubt if the Tractators had been the apostle's auditors, they would have had presumption enough, to read him a monitory lecture, 'and tell him that he must use a little more reserve in communicating religious knowledge to the people; lest the mercenary policy of their infallible Church, should be endangered thereby.' But what other reply would the indignant apostle of the Gentiles have made to these babes in di-

* Psalm li. 7. † John xii. 32, 33. ‡ Matt. xx. 28.
§ Romans v. 1—10.

vinity, but his favourite one? "Other foundation (for acceptance with God) can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ,"* in his death, righteousness, and mediation.

If I would keep this dissertation to a convenient size for my readers, I must pass over a mass of evidence that might be gleaned from the scriptures, and close with a few remarks from Peter, and John the author of the apocalypse.

The venerable apostle, whose name, and zeal, and piety, they profess to appreciate so highly, though they are lamentably deficient in imitating all his excellencies, happens to speak more frequently and emphatically, on the atonement than they are wont to do. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you."† Would this intrepid champion have been silenced even within sight of the Vatican, from a bold avowal of the soul-cheering truth? No: if ecclesiastical history speaks correctly, he freely submitted to crucifixion with his head down to the ground, rather than "deny the Lord that bought him." Would to God the Tractators, like him, would "not love their lives, even unto death," that they might bear

* 1 Cor. iii. 11. † 1 Pet. i. 18—21.

an honourable testimony with him in behalf of an all important truth! But this is too much to expect from men of their principles and spirit.

St. John, the Divine, luxuriates, with ineffable delight, in company with the exalted hierarchy of the Church triumphant, in the all-absorbing theme of the atonement: "Saying with a voice, sufficiently loud to reach the occupants of the Vatican, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."* But the decree is gone forth from Rome, and cannot be revoked, that you must speak with reserve about the atonement of Christ, lest you should injure the doctrine of the mass, and bring that gross delusion into merited contempt. The Tractators, at least, will subserviently honour it, though all other honest men should have the temerity to dispute its legality.

10. I must break another lance, with 'the writers of Tracts for the Times,' falsely so called, and then conclude my observations, on their preposterous scheme of divinity. They have the effrontery to tell us, 'that the Reformers (to whom under God, we owe an everlasting debt of gratitude, not easily discharged) are but Reformers so called.' This is a proposition at once so sweeping and impertinent, as to outrage the best feelings of

* Rev. v. 8—10.

my soul. As an English Protestant minister of the Gospel of my Lord and Saviour, I feel an indignant burst of displeasure at it, which it is difficult for me to restrain.

But if the insulting dicta of these deceived men could reach the ears of Wickliffe, and Luther, and Melancthon, and Zuinglius, and Cranmer, and Hooper, and Latimer, and Ridley, &c., would it not evoke their manes, and induce them once more to appear amongst us, if for no other purpose, certainly to chastise the unbridled insolence of these misguided men. But, O ye sainted spirits, revelling in everlasting bliss, we will not disturb your enviable repose and felicity. Nor is it necessary: for ye have recorded in your ponderous tomes, written as with a diamond or pen of iron, the imperishable truths of the christian religion, and have taught us by your fortitude in death, how to live, and how to die, as the devoted servants of the cross. If I mistake not, your dying predictions, in sight of the fire and the faggot, have been verified—'You have kindled a flame of love and zeal in our breasts and throughout the kingdom, which Popery and Puseyism can never extinguish.'

11. But the Dissenters from our establishment, whether professionally, or educationally, or conscientiously, such, 'are a mob of tiptops, gapes, and yawns.' And pray, ye accomplished and elegant Tractarians, from whence did ye derive these terse and polished epithets? They are too classical and refined to boast of their extraction from Oxford or Cambridge, or any of the polite

schools of modern literature. They must either have emanated from German fountains of learning and divinity,* or, as I suspect, are redolent of Rome. Let them be quickly relegated thence, with all "their sins and imperfections on their heads," as the fittest depository they can have; for they are rather too vulgar for the refined ears of moderns, in Protestant countries.

Had I, however, been one of the coarser part of the "mob," I should have been almost tempted, in spite of consequences, to have thrown a few missiles at the heads of these accomplished men. Or had I, perchance, been some learned member of the caballers, I should have tried, to inflict upon them the castigation which they so richly deserve.

In future controversies, let them learn from the immortal Hooker, whom they cannot refute, how to conduct an argument, in a gentlemanly and christian spirit. When answering the cavils of an opponent, that great man, 'who being dead, yet speaketh," said, 'to your abuse and invective I answer nothing; but to your sophistical objections I make the following reply.'†

And now, O ye learned philosophers and divines, whether ye originate from 'Academic shades, or learned halls,' divest yourselves for a time of your cumbrous weight of literary lore; and come with

* One of the Tractators, (if I am rightly informed) drank liberally some sixteen years ago, at German fonts of Theology; this is a bad source for conveying the pure streams of the "water of life."

† Hooker's Answer to Mr. Travers.

me into the school of Christ; and let us, for a while, take our humble position, like Mary of old, at his feet, "and learn of him; for he is meek and lowly in heart, and we shall find rest for our souls. For his yoke is easy, and his burthen is light."* With a pious and grateful reminiscence of our instructions, we shall retire from the hallowed fount, 'as scholars well armed against the dangers of the times,' or the approaching contest, which is for ever to seal the destiny of "the man of sin, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or worshipped; so that he, as God sitteth (by an act of usurpation peculiar to himself) in the temple of God, shewing that he is God; even that wicked one, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."†

12. I have a few words more to offer with reference to the style and animus of the tracts themselves. Conceived in the spirit of the lying oracles of the heathen gods; they are calculated *ad captandum vulgum*, and so artfully constructed as to impose upon the credulous, by their adaptation, to any event, whether true or false. When the style should be plain, it is ambiguous, and metaphysical, and mystical; when it should speak literally, it is shrouded in mystery, or elegantly attired in tropes, for the admirers of metaphors and figures. Beware, O ye pigmy theologians,

* Matt. ii. 28—30. † 2 Thess. ii. 3—9.

and look with suspicion on the hook which is thrown out, and the fatal net which is spread, to entangle your souls! The tracts could not justly complain of ill-treatment, if they were burnt 'by the hands of the common hangman.'

But I must repress this exterminating spirit, for they happen to be 'Tracts for the Times,' and must, therefore, be more mercifully dealt with. 'O mores! oh tempora!'

13. Having exhibited, at some, length, the prominent features of the tractarian code of faith, I must now say something as to the irreligious and immoral tendency of the system, which it inculcates. Now, the perversion or denial of "the sufficiency of Holy Scripture for salvation," the ascribing of a necessary efficacy to the sacraments, which places the administrators thereof in the imposing attitude of dispensers, or withholders of life, pardon, and peace, together with the rejection of the doctrine of justification by faith, are distinctive marks of Romanism, and not only strike at the foundations of Christianity, but what is worse, are absolutely subversive of the interests of morality and good works, by taking away the only efficient cause that produces them. A union and communion with Christ, by faith, the Head of his Church militant and triumphant, is the only cause and source of acceptable righteousness in the heart and life of fallen creatures.

Hear, our blessed Saviour, on the all-momentous subject. "Abide in me (that is by an act of incumbent faith) and I in you. As the branch cannot

bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye (my people) are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."*

St. Paul, in corroboration of the same truth, affirms, "in Christ Jesus," or under the Christian dispensation, "neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith, which worketh, by love," to God, to man, to the welfare of our never-dying souls.† And to shew the potency of the mighty grace, for which he inflexibly contends, he unqualifiedly declares, that without "faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to him (for the purpose of worship and acceptance) must believe that he exists, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."‡

The Homilies of the Church of England unequivocally maintain, that genuine faith, wrought in the heart by the Spirit of God,§ is the efficient and primary cause of all holiness, and goodness, and true virtue. ‖

The articles positively assert the same truth. "Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Holy Spirit are not pleasant to God; forasmuch as they do not spring from faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace (or as the school authors say) to deserve grace of congruity, yea, rather, for that

* John xv. 2—9. † Gal. v. 6. ‡ Heb. xi. 6.
§ Col. ii. 12. ‖ Homilies, IV. V.

that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." * When, however, though I am not able to scrutinize the heart, I can discern in the Tractarians such unfeigned humility for sin, as shall induce them, "to smite upon their breasts, saying, God be merciful to us sinners;" † when I can recognize that "poverty of spirit," to which the blessing of the Lord is annexed, which strips its possessors of their own fancied righteousness, to clothe themselves with the spotless robe of the Saviour's merits only; when, instead of invocating the Virgin Mary, a pious woman, but having no power to save the lost, because it was never accorded to her, the Tractators, like the men of Jerusalem, shall say, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" or in the more impassioned language of the Apostle, whom they most admire, shall cry fervently to Jesus, and say, "Lord, save, or we perish!" then I shall joyfully admit, that they are pious and good men. But I must wait with great impatience for this genuine evidence of external and internal religion, before I can presume to pronounce ex cathedrâ, that they are enlightened Christians, or fit Tractators for the awful times in which we live. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil: that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight." ‡

* Luke xvi. 14, 15. † Ibid. xviii. 13. ‡ Isa. v. 20.

14. And now I have an exhibition to make, which I hope my readers will have too much grace and knowledge to admire; for I shall be pained while I contemplate the awful reality. Many of you will express your astonishment at the effrontery and impiety of those, who are attempting to foist upon us the monstrosities of Rome. But come, and examine your Bibles, and all this wonder will instantly vanish away. Nearly eighteen hundred years ago, the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of St. Paul, dictated the following words, which every student of the divine Word, and every Christian who has eyes to see, and ears to hear, knows to be applicable to the Church of Rome, in its unwarrantable dogmas, spirit, tendency, and practice. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times (under the Gospel dispensation,) some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils: speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared as with a hot iron: forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving, of them which believe and know the truth."* The succeeding passage is eminently true of the same apostacy, and yet may be applicable to other heretics, imprisoning "the truth of God in unrighteousness."† "This know also, that in the last days, perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous; boas-

* 1 Tim. iv. 1—4. † Romans i. 18.

ters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." * The Apostle having been educated in the school of Christ, and being gifted by his sacred Spirit, with a discriminating taste and judgment, has graphically delineated his characters with an inimitable hand. If his Holiness the Pope, and his satellites, had sat for their corporal likeness, to Raphael, Guido, Rubens, or any other of the Italian masters, they could not have produced a portrait more just or expressive, in all the prominent features and traits of their countenances. But let us attempt to decipher the painting, and explain the motley group of figures of which it consists. At the apex, sits his satanic majesty encircled with a halo, not of light and glory, but of darkness. The Pope is the next character, immediately under his feet. Then follow his cardinals and priests, on the right and left; and lastly the Tractators and their votaries at the bottom, to complete the energy, and give expression and animation to the whole scene. I should not have ventured to give so exact a description if I had been in any danger of obtaining a cardinal's

* 2 Tim. iii. 1—6.

hat, or any other honour which the meretricious whore of Babylon can bestow. I must leave these baubles to those, who are more ambitious of them than myself.

I foresaw on the first publication of the tracts (without the gift of prescience) that the Tractators were endeavouring to lead us into an unholy alliance with that apostate, idolatrous, and sanguinary Church, which has this inscription legibly written on her forehead, "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots, and abominations of the earth. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain on earth." *

False teachers and heresiarchs in all ages have acted warily in introducing their errors to corrupt the faith and practice of the Church. They generally take care not to shock the prejudices of those whom they wish to draw into connexion with themselves, by a full and open avowal of their heretical tenets. They advance step by step, until they have entangled their unwary disciples in the net of error. The Tractators in imitation of their prototypes, have adopted a similar line of carnal policy, by leading on their unsuspicious devotees by little and little, until they have prepared them for the full developement of their pernicious doctrines. They began like men conscious that they were going to attack vital truths, which all christendom maintains, with much cau-

* Rev. xvii. 5, 6; viii. 24.

tion and reserve in communicating their pestilential dogmas, pretending great zeal for endeavouring to bring the Anglican Church to a more catholic simplicity. Now that their new-fangled system has become more palatable to their noviciates, men who do not like to retain God in their knowledge, but are given over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient, they begin to throw off all disguise, and abandon concealment, by appearing in their proper characters, as teachers whose avowed object is to subvert the fundamental verities of scriptural Protestantism, and substitute in their place the damnable heresies and idolatries of Rome.

This spirit is markedly prominent in several of the tracts, but especially in the Ninetieth, which is full of scholastic Jesuitry and deceit. It is decidedly the worst of the whole series, and it is not surprising that it should have provoked the censure of the hebdomadal board at Oxford, shortly after its appearance. The writer makes an insidious and base attempt by language and specious arguments, artfully and obscurely constructed, to impress the Articles of the Church of England into the service of Puseyism, which is nothing less than Romanism in disguise; for that tract covertly aims to shew what it is literally impossible to prove, namely, that the Articles have a decided leaning towards some of the foulest errors of Popery. Men must be far advanced in delusion before they can cast away all reverence for truth and honesty. But the inspired volume accounts for it by telling us "that

evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." We will fearlessly tell the writer of that infamous tract that he must be consciously guilty of trying by mere sophistry, to make articles which speak acknowledged truth, assert the most palpable error, in order to blind (if possible,) his readers with an ostentatious parade of learning, falsely so called. He well knows, as well as the whole world, that not one of the Articles, Homilies, and Rituals, fairly explained, has the least papistical tendency, or gives the smallest sanction to Romish errors; but on the contrary, that they were written by our pious and learned Reformers expressly to oppugn and confute the false dogmas of the apostate Church of Rome. But it should seem that language, however definite may be its meaning, and decided its tone, becomes in the hands of the tortuous Tractators a mere Babel of confusion, which they make to mean anything or nothing to subserve their dishonest purposes. Such men cannot escape the well-deserved censures of the Church and one of its temporal heads, who in 'a royal declaration set forth' for settling disputes about the meaning of our great standard of faith, forbids 'that hereafter any man should put his own sense or comment to be the meaning of the Articles, but should take them in the literal and grammatical sense."* The voice of the Church collectively, and of its guardians particularly, should solemnly protest

* Burnet's Introduction to the Articles, page 10.

against this scandalous invasion of its rights, by denouncing the author of Tract 90, and calling upon him publicly, to recant his wicked errors. Whether such a step be adopted or not, sentence of excommunication is formally pronounced by apostolical authority against him, in the following words, which without due repentance will be finally ratified in the court of heaven: "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself."

If the primitive system of ecclesiastical discipline recommended for adoption in this work were strictly enforced, the writer of that tract, and those who abet his sentiments, would be deservedly expelled from the bosom of a Church which solemnly repudiates and condemns their wicked errors. If the Tractarians, and their admirers, cannot conscientiously subscribe to the doctrinal Articles of the Church, let them in common honesty voluntarily retire from her communion, and not pollute her by their presence and injurious ministrations. Let them save us from the painful spectacle of witnessing a divided Church, torn in pieces by faction and error. No man should be allowed deliberately to swear adhesion to formularies of faith which he wantonly violates by preaching and writing; for such are faithless, unprincipled men, whom it would be a real happiness to excommunicate from her pale.

What would the glorified Cranmer, Latimer,

and Ridley, who attested their belief in the truth of the Articles with their blood, if they were permitted to come down from heaven, say to such a daring innovation? Would they hold Christian communion with such men? or rather endeavour by the exercise of their authority, to rid the Church of their presence, as a grievous nuisance, not to be endured? No spurious charity would exempt them from merited reprobation. The late Bishop of Lincoln's remarks on subscription shall close this stringent stricture on the Tracts: 'The Articles,' Bishop Prettyman says, 'are to be subscribed in their plain and obvious sense, and assent is to be given to them simply and unequivocally.' All persons when they enter into holy orders, or are admitted to any ecclesiastical cure or benefice, are required by law to subscribe these Articles, that all who are employed in the ministry of the established Church, should unfeignedly believe the doctrines they contain.' And having mentioned 'the professed object of these Articles,' and 'the indispensable form of subscription,' and how 'it behoves every one before he offers himself a candidate for holy orders, to peruse carefully the articles of our Church, and compare them with the written word of God;' 'If,' his lordship says, 'upon mature examination he believes them to be authorized by Scripture, he may conscientiously subscribe them; but, if on the contrary, he thinks he sees reason to dissent from any of the doctrines asserted in them, no hope of emolument or honour, no dread of inconvenience or disappointment,

should induce him to express his solemn assent to propositions, which in fact he does not believe. 'And let it,' he subjoins, 'be ever remembered, that in a business of this serious and important nature, no species whatever of evasion, subterfuge, or reserve, is to be allowed or can be practised without imminent danger of incurring the wrath of God.'*

Popery exults and revels with exceeding great joy, at the advances thus made in subjugating England to the see of Rome, as may be seen in a letter from Dr. Wiseman to the editor of the Tablet, a Roman Catholic newspaper.

But 'England expects every man to do his duty' at this critical juncture, by saying and acting in the spirit of the determination, 'nulla pax cum Roma.'

With proper deference and respect to my superiors, yet with becoming fidelity to God, I call upon her illustrious Majesty, the Queen, and her royal consort; I adjure the heads and tutors of both Universities, our prelates, the conservators of the Church of England; together with her priests, deacons, and faithful members, to protest effectively against the blasphemous arrogance and impiety of those teachers who would exalt tradition, and the fallible dicta of men, above the infallible word of God, which is declared by himself to be "given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruc-

* Prettyman's Elements of Theology, Vol. II. p. 566.

tion in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."* I call upon the whole Church of Christ in this kingdom, both in its individual and collective capacity, to defend its rights, and say in a tone of just indignation to the invaders of their Christian privileges, as the enraged barons and knights said to king John at Runimede, 'nolumus leges anglicanas, mutari.' For the preposterous doctrines of the tracts have already led some to Rome itself, and others half-way, and will lead the whole nation to that wicked city (as a just punishment for its apathy and ingratitude) if it makes not a timely retrograde motion.

Let no individual in the land, however obscure, refuse to give his modicum of influence and assistance in extirpating the pestiferous heresy. From the banks of the Thames, to the borders of the Tweed, let a simultaneous cry go forth against the unhallowed attempts of the Tractators. Petition from every city, town, village, and hamlet of the kingdom, your bishops, the throne, and both Houses of Parliament, against their daring efforts to bring the church and the nation into subjection to Rome.

But now Dr. Shuttleworth is dead,† and Bishop M'Ilvaine and others have protested, are there no modern Davids in the Universities, to go forth

* Timothy.

† The whole nation must feel a high gratification at the elevation of Dr. Gilbert to the See of Chichester. I for one beg to tender sincere thanks to Sir Robert Peel, for so discreet an exercise of the crown patronage.

with their slings and stones, to slay the new-fangled Goliah of error? "The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph." *

Are there none of the sons of the Church fired with the righteous indignation of Phineas of old, who shall "rise up from amongst the congregation," to thrust the disturbers of her peace from her bosom; and say to her faithful children, "Depart, we pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins." †

At least I may be allowed to say, were I clothed with civil and ecclesiastical authority, I should soon know how to deal summarily with the Tractarians and their adherents. Without doing violence to the just rights of conscience, I would promptly expel them from the camp as troublers in Israel.

15. I must now close with the authors of the mischief complained of themselves. Gentlemen, in the face of God, of the Church, of your bishops, and the world, you have sworn fealty and obedience to a Church, whose doctrines you either repudiate or explain away, whose integrity you covertly impeach, and which you are not reluctant to betray into the hands of her deadly enemy, the

* 2 Sam. i. 17, 22. † Numb. xvi. 23—26.

Pope; whom you 'have declared has, and ought not to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual within this realm: so help you God.' Do the oaths of supremacy and abjuration admit of any mental reservation? or is the solemn oath which you took at your ordination and induction to your benefices, a matter of such trifling importance, that you can violate it with impunity? Cursed be the deceiver who sweareth falsely in the name of God! And are you so lost to all sense of honour and integrity, to all the dictates of conscience, as to eat the bread of God's house, and rob his faithful pastors of their just patrimony, whilst you preach doctrines which you have sworn exanimo to oppose, as damnable and heretical?

There are two paths open to your adoption, one of which you must choose immediately.

Either make atonement to God, the nation, and the Church, by a formal and sincere 'recantation of your wicked errors,' which is the safest and happiest course to pursue; or retire instantly from a Church which you deeply injure by the publication of tenets, which her Queen, bishops, priests, deacons, sons; yea, and yourselves also, have solemnly abjured? If in the present position which you occupy you could acquire all the preferments and honours which can be heaped upon you, what will they ultimately avail you? "For what," says your righteous judge, "will it profit you, to gain the whole world, and lose your own souls? or what will you give in exchange for your

souls?"* I am glad to find from two† of our most popular journals that I am not singularly severe in my opinions concerning you. The language of one of them shall be quoted for your instruction. The Times thus speaks: 'In their anxiety to deprecate and neutralize the indefeasible right of every Christian conscience to exert its best ability in ascertaining the meaning of scripture, they have deliberately adopted some of the very worst figments of Popery, which, with the large funds intrusted to them for the dissemination of the Protestant faith, they are industriously propagating through the entire kingdom, by means of certain stupid and perfidious pamphlets entitled 'Tracts for the Times.' These men, be it observed, as ordained clergymen of the reformed Church of England, are sworn to its entire canons and Protestant faith! If they are of opinion, as positively affirmed by themselves, that our noble Church is too Protestant for their conscientious convictions, let them shew their conscientiousness by resigning the emoluments which they now employ for her disparagement; and let them openly join the Romish confederacy at once, in favour of whose claims to genuine Christian Catholicism they are labouring might and main in the very heart of the Protestant garrison. But as long as with their present anti-Protestant sentiments, they persist in retaining Protestant benefices and obli-

* Matt. xvi. 23—26.

† See also a judicious and stringent article in the Globe, Number 12,376, dated January 24, 1842.

gations, their pretensions to conscientiousness can deserve nothing but unmitigated contempt. Until they purge their consciences from the guilt of compounding them for filthy lucre's sake, we must sternly deny to Dr. Pusey and his colleagues the smallest credit for moral integrity in their innovations. Their reputation shall not stand them instead of bona fide character. Their professed condemnation of certain corruptions in the Romish apostasy shall not excuse them for their passionate and infatuated defence of her pretended catholic integrity. The infamy of perjury, as identified with the violation of their Protestant vows, is adhering to them in its most odious form; and so long as they continue to devour and desecrate the shew-bread of England's Church, we shall not cease to denounce these Oxford Jesuits as meanly endeavouring to effect within the Establishment, what the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Spencer is more honestly striving for out of it. It is time for us to speak out upon this subject. It is fit that our slumbering and unsuspecting country should be made duly sensible of the insolent and audacious advances which Popery is now making and avowing against their civil and religious liberties.'*

Act then like upright men, by going with Mr. Sibthorp directly to Rome; or if you prefer stopping at "Appii Forum," † and casting a lingering look behind, come back at once from thence to a Church which blessed you in your infancy; and if you

* Times Newspaper.

† Acts xxviii. 15.

will act conformably to her directions, she will still shew you the way to Christ and his everlasting kingdom. I most sincerely join in the devout prayer of the Church for the restoration of the Tractators and their misguided followers, to her communion: 'Almighty God, who shewest to them that be in error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness: Grant unto all them that are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may eschew those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ.'* Amen.

* Collect for the Third Sunday after Easter.

CHAPTER XX.

ON THE UNIVERSITIES OF OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE—THE DEFECTIVE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION WHICH PREVAILS IN THEM—AN IMPROVED SYSTEM OF ACADEMICAL INSTRUCTION RECOMMENDED.

THE University of Oxford was founded by King Alfred in the year of our Lord 806, which at that time, consisted of only three colleges built by the piety and munificence of that monarch, who was devoutly intent on benefiting the nation, not only by his prowess in arms, but also by the promotion of sound learning. That University now contains twenty-four colleges and halls, with about 1800 or 2000 students, a principal part of whom resort there to qualify themselves for the sacred ministry, and the rest for the liberal professions, and for the varied departments of public life. The University of Cambridge contains seventeen colleges and halls. These Universities were designed by their founders to be 'seminaries of religious and useful learning,' nurseries of orthodox principles, in which young men were to be correctly trained and disciplined, for the effective discharge of the pastoral office; which, if duly performed, is the most honourable, arduous, and beneficial, in which a finite being can engage. Whether these institu-

tions have fully answered the ends for which they were instituted, has long been a matter of grave dispute and controversy. Public opinion is divided on this important point; not a few contending, that by pursuing a wrong course of education, those renowned seats of learning have almost frustrated the intention of their founders; whilst others, and those forming a considerable majority of the piety and intelligence of the kingdom, justly appreciating the important benefits which they have been the means of widely communicating, still contend, that by adopting a less exclusive and more general system of education, they might become more eminently useful 'for raising up a constant succession of faithful men to serve God in Church and state.'

As the Universities were built for the good of the nation, and not for the private advantage of those who preside over them, or those who derive emolument from them, by instructing the gentlemen who repair to them for education; it should not be a matter of surprise, if the public who feel so deep an interest in their welfare and prosperity, should wish to see them conducted with more vigour, and rendered fully productive of all the religious, moral, and civil benefit, which they are able to confer.

It has been repeatedly objected to one of them, that mathematics and the metaphysical sciences, engross too much of the students time, to the neglect of those more appropriate studies which have a direct tendency "to make the man of God per-

fect, throughly furnished unto all good works :"* and to the other, that too great a preponderance is given to the pursuit of classical and other branches of human learning, to the almost total neglect of Scripture and sound theology, which are adapted to make men more efficient ministers of Christ, and more able expositors and teachers of the divine word, which is the mighty instrument employed by the all-wise God to effectuate men's salvation and happiness. Now though the systems pursued in both of the national universities have much to recommend them, yet I fear, upon the most impartial examination, that there is just foundation for those complaints which the public voice has loudly uttered against them. If the testimony of so pious and learned a divine as Bishop Burnet is allowed to have any weight, then there must be something essentially defective in the education of those young men who are designed for the ministry; something that calls for a complete revision and remodelling of the whole system, to adapt it more perfectly to the exigencies of the present age, and to make it the conductor of a larger amount of spiritual benefit to the present and future generations of mankind. The venerable prelate thus speaks concerning the bulk of those candidates who came to him for ordination in his time; and perhaps, with regard to the subject-matter of his deep regret, things are not materially improved in our own day: 'Our Ember

* 2 Timothy iii. 16, 17.

weeks are the burden and grief of my life. The much greater part of those who come to be ordained are ignorant to a degree, not to be apprehended by those who are not obliged to know it. The easiest part of knowledge is that to which they are the greatest strangers; I mean the plainest part of the Scriptures, which they say, in excuse for their ignorance, that their tutors in the universities never mention the reading to them; so that they can give no account, or at least a very imperfect one, of the contents even of the Gospels. Those who have read some few books, yet never seem to have read the Scriptures. Many cannot give a tolerable account even of the catechism itself, how short and plain soever. They cry and think it a sad disgrace to be denied orders, though the ignorance of some is such, that in a well-regulated state of things, they would appear not knowing enough to be admitted to the holy sacrament.'

This does often tear my heart. The case is not much better in many, who having got into orders come for institution, and cannot make it appear that they have read the Scriptures or any other good book since they were ordained; so that the small measure of knowledge upon which they got into holy orders not being improved, is in a way to be quite lost; and then they think it a great hardship if they are told, they must know the Scriptures and the body of divinity better before they can be trusted with the care of souls. These things pierce one's soul, and make him often cry out, "Oh that I had wings like a dove, for

then would I fly away and be at rest." * What are we likely to grow to? In what a case are we! to deal with any adversary, atheist, papist, or dissenters, or in any sort to promote the honour of God, and carry on the great concerns of the Gospel, when so gross an ignorance in the fundamentals of religion has spread itself so much among those who ought to teach others, and 'yet need that one teach them the first principles of the oracles of God." † Here then the deficiences and general want of right qualifications in so many of the clerical body, so feelingly deplored, arise in great measure from a too lax and indifferent system of admission into, and education at, our universities. 'The first great desideratum for the remedy of the evil, is of course to raise materially the standard of scriptural and religious qualification. If this were done both at College and in the Church, in the lapse of a few years, we should see a very different order of clergy from the present, springing into existence. With young men in almost every other profession, care is taken to have them instructed in the duties of it; and a certain degree of proficiency is exacted to fit them for the business of it; but in the universities, neither a due sense of the one, nor a knowledge of the other, is deemed of sufficient consequence to be either imparted to, or required from them; hence it can hardly be expected that, when they have finished their studies, and are admitted into the

* Psalm lv. 6—9.

† Burnet's Pastoral Care, Preface, pp. iv—vi. Heb. v. 12.

Church, they should attach more importance to such qualifications for their clerical office, than the university itself has done. Hence, indifference to their office is added to their incompetence for it; and the influence they ought to possess is lost, not only because they cannot require it, but because they do not desire it.' With respect to the course of instruction in divinity pursued at the universities, it is far too scanty and defective to answer any very important end; or be properly deemed sufficient, as a passport to, and qualification for, the office of divines.

How, it may be asked, with such meagre instruction in that divine science, the knowledge of which is, above all others, so indispensably requisite to constitute a faithful minister of Christ, can the incapacity of the candidates for orders, elude the scrutiny, or insure the approbation of the bishop, when examined for ordination? The fact is easily accounted for. With the addition of a very little theological and scriptural learning, the bishop insists on nothing more for ordination, than the university does for a degree. Thus, whilst the latter asserts that it imparts as much learning as is required, the former pleads, that he requires all that the latter deems necessary; and, between the accommodating laxity of the two, it is not difficult for an incompetent person to intrude himself into the service of the Church.

Surely these things ought not to continue any longer at our universities, in an inquiring age like this. When a spirit of general improvement per-

vades the whole of our systems of legislation, is it sound policy, and true wisdom, in the universities, or the Church, to be the only bodies that will not benefit by the intellectual progress of the times? Is it safe—is it judicious to resist salutary reforms, when the voice of reason and religion imperatively demand them? Or shall we pertinaciously resist the pressure of public importunity, until escape from being crushed by it is absolutely impossible?

I have no doubt that every candid unprejudiced man in the nation will readily admit that a better system of education for the ministry than that which now prevails, may be easily devised, and carried into execution, by liberal and enlightened tutors. Though by no means so well qualified for the important task, as many of the members of those seats of learning are, I shall venture to suggest, as succinctly as may be, an improved plan of university and academical preparation for the ministry, with a hope, that some more competent minds will take up the subject, and supply my defects.

1. The mode of admission to Oxford and Cambridge is by far too easy and perfunctory for aspirants to the sacred office. Not only should they be decently conversant with the most popular classical writers and historians; but have a tolerably correct acquaintance with the Old and New Testaments, the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and some orthodox system of divinity, which explains and enforces them. Such knowledge should be ascertained both by a *viva voce*, and

written examination; and the possession of it, to a certain extent, be made a *sine qua non* of admission into college. This inquiry would test the probable fitness or unfitness of the candidates for the pastoral office, and lay the foundation for their future advancement and usefulness. It would enable the pious tutor (and none but such is qualified to make the requisite scrutiny,) to determine whether the young men, who propose themselves, are eligible for the high function to which they aspire, or not. If, on examination, they were found to be defective in the knowledge of divinity, no earthly or secular consideration whatever, should induce the college to adopt them as members of its society, or incline them to embark in the service of the Church, for which their incompetency and ignorance proclaim them unworthy. It is far more advisable for such young men to direct their attention to some other profession, in which they might be serviceable to the community; than to rush thoughtlessly into the sanctuary of God, where their presence is not less abominable in the eye of the majesty of heaven, than it is offensive to all good men.

We may easily judge in what light the unhallowed intruder into the ministry, is viewed by the Lord, if we ever so cursorily advert to the judgment pronounced by him concerning those false prophets who profanely assumed the office of teachers, in the days of Jeremiah. "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. Thus saith

the Lord of Hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets, that prophesy unto you: they make you vain. For they speak a vision out of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. Behold I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall; for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land."*

A young man, then, I conceive, at the time he seeks admission to the university, as well as when he enters into holy orders, should be able to exhibit to those who examine him, proper and unexceptionable credentials of office, namely ardent piety and devotion, with a suitable measure of scriptural and divine knowledge, "that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers, and save both himself and them that hear him."†

Until such qualifications, as I have mentioned, are deemed essential for entrance at college, not only will the clergy as a body be inefficient for the right discharge of their high and solemn vocation, but no effectual barrier will be set up against the introduction of such heterodox notions in divinity as have lately arisen, to the scandal and detriment of our universities, and the interest and character of the Church of England itself.

I shall be told most probably that an examination similar to that for which I am an advocate, does take place, at the entrance of a young gentle-

* Jer. xxiii. 15—22; ix. 12—17. † Titus i. 9. 1 Tim. iv. 16.

man, at college. But of what kind is it, and of what does it consist? Generally speaking of a few critical and historical questions gathered from scripture, without any especial reference to the grand peculiarities of the Christian faith, or to that experimental knowledge of them which he should possess and advance in, if he is at all desirous "to do the work of an evangelist creditably, and make afterwards full proof of his ministry."* Is it not absolutely necessary that he should, "if he would be an ornament of the Church, and support its true dignity, credit, and usefulness, have a competent stock of sacred learning, without which all other attainments are comparatively of trifling importance. I speak it without the slightest intention to give offence to either party when I say, that the initiatory examination in divinity is most frequently of so superficial a character, as to afford no satisfactory proof of the theological ability of him who conducts it, or any fair criterion of the scriptural orthodoxy of the person examined.

2. The divine knowledge acquired at school, and at entrance, should be studiously kept up, and largely augmented through the successive stages of a young man's residence at college. 'Non progredi est regredi,' is a maxim of prime importance in divinity, as well as any other branch of natural science.

I would take the liberty to suggest for the accomplishment of this great desideratum, that

* 2 Timothy iv. 5.

weekly expository lectures, on select portions of the Old Testament, and the whole of the gospels and epistles of the New Testament should be delivered by the tutor of every college, throughout each term. By the tutor's acquaintance with the doctrinal and preceptive parts of holy writ, aided by the light thrown on them by sound and practical commentators, such as Lowth, Scott, Pool, Quesnell, Doddridge, and Whitby, the student would be furnished with invaluable assistance for prosecuting this essential part of his sacred office, and acquire a habit of "comparing things spiritual" with one another, so as to perceive the harmony that subsists between the several parts of the scriptures, and learn the design and tendency of the whole. The author of this publication retains a grateful impression of the benefit, which he derived at the university from the able and judicious expository lectures of this kind, given by the late pious and learned Vice-Principal of Saint Edmund Hall, now Bishop Wilson, and Metropolitan of India. Similar lectures are weekly delivered by the present respectable and industrious successor of the venerable prelate, and other tutors, in *different* colleges.

3. Once a week a theological lecture on some essential topic in divinity might be advantageously given by the tutor to his pupils; so that all the grand outlines and lineaments of the christian scheme may be compendiously exhibited to their eye, in the course of the academic year. Thus would our young divine, by the blessing of God

on the exertions of a good preceptor, be gradually acquiring a ripeness of sacred knowledge, by which "his profiting might appear in his subsequent ministerial course, to all men;"* especially to those whom the divine head of the Church might appoint him to instruct.

4. As I think that every candidate for holy orders should "study to shew himself approved to God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth,"† it is necessary that a text of sacred writ should be either chosen by the tutor, or selected by himself, on which he might compose an analysis, or heads, and substrata of a discourse, after the manner of Claude's Essays, or Bishop Beveridge's Thesaurus; in order that he may attain a facility of making sermons, when he shall be called on to feed the flock committed to his charge. This may be examined by the tutor with a view to the correction of any faults which may be found either in the sentiments or construction, and for the commendation of any excellencies which it may contain. This weekly exercise might be continued for the first two or three years; and be materially improved on in the remaining stages of his continuance at the University, by clothing these skeletons with such appropriate expansions of thoughts, ideas, and language, as would convert them into full bodied and well-digested sermons, fit for instructing and edifying any congregation,

* 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16. † 2 Tim. ii. 15.

over which he might be destined to preside. Thus not only would a sufficient quantity of scriptural knowledge and sound divinity be treasured up in the mind of the aspirant to the office of the ministry, for the commencement of his career, but by shewing him the necessity and giving him a taste for a more diligent study of the Holy Scriptures, qualify him to lead on his people not only to a fuller acquaintance with "the principles of the doctrine of Christ;" but to acquire in time a relish for that "strong meat which belongeth unto them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."* I scarcely need observe that as preaching the word is to constitute the principal business of a devout clergyman through each successive week, he cannot too early accustom himself both to compose written discourses, for at least seven years; and at the end of that period, if he has self-possession and other qualifications suitable for the work, he might analyze a text and deduce from an attentive consideration of it, sufficient doctrinal and preceptive matter, clothed in simple, yet energetic language, to deliver a discourse 'memoriter,' without the excessive labour and time which the writing of a sermon or two must necessarily occupy and deduct from the other duties incumbent on a minister of Jesus Christ. The very appearance of his audience, and the diversity of their character, would

* Heb. v. 13, 14.

often suggest in the pulpit, thoughts that might not offer themselves to his mind in his study: and thus enable him to address both the saint and the sinner, the believer and the impenitent, the contrite and proud Pharisee, as well as the worldly, the profane, and the unbelieving, in a manner calculated to edify and comfort the former, and to alarm, convict, and instruct the latter class.*

This mode of preaching has been adopted by some of the most enlightened divines in every age of the Church of Christ; nor is it an innovation on the usage of our Universities themselves. For some time anterior to the reign of Charles the Second, the practice of delivering such discourses prevailed at Oxford. When that monarch was addressed by the preacher appointed for the day in a written sermon, with a view to discourage the method, then attempted to be introduced, he desired that his name might be sent to him, in order that his Majesty might administer the reproof which the circumstance required.

5. Ecclesiastical histories, such as Mosheim, Milner, and Basnage, might be read with great profit by the clerical student, and weekly examinations might be conducted by his tutor, to ascertain the actual progress made in this valuable department of Christian knowledge.

'Books of criticism and on Scripture antiquities, are at hand in great plenty. It will be impossible to read them all. The selection belongs not to

* Rev. T. Robinson's Essay on extempore preaching.

me, but to the tutor. The synopsis criticorum, Godwin, and Jennings, will perhaps be of the number he will choose. A good ecclesiastical history continued to the present time seems to be still a desideratum. A mass of materials, so far as it goes, is already prepared in the Magdeburg Centuriators, which affords a striking monument of the compiler's industry; but it would likewise require some patience in the reader, who should undertake to go through it.'

Bossuet's Universal History is a valuable book, from which the student may glean useful materials. Mosheim is one of the best books we have on the subject, if the reader knows enough of himself, and of the work of grace on his heart, to prevent him from being misled by him, when treating on subjects which he does not appear to have rightly understood. But as to facts I believe he is in general worthy of credit. Bingham's Antiquities may deserve inspection, if it be only to shew how soon and how generally the beautiful simplicity of the Gospel was corrupted by those who professed it.

6. As to the study of theology. It will be expedient for the student to adopt some system or body of divinity. A discreet tutor will refer him to the choice of the most scriptural one. Archbishop Usher, Turretin, Witsius, and Ridgley, may be studied with advantage. Though each of them have some peculiar excellency to recommend them, yet particular objections may be made to them all, as to the use of them. The Bible should

be that great body of divinity most frequently consulted. And were I a tutor myself, I think I should prefer the Gospels, and the epistles of St. Paul, as a summary to any human system whatever, especially his epistles to the Romans, Galatians, the Hebrews, and Timothy, and Titus.

There are few uninspired writings however excellent in the main, but bear some marks of infirmity, attachment, and prepossession, which in a greater or less degree are inseparable from the present state of human nature. I would have candidates for the ministry draw their knowledge immediately from the fountain-head as much as possible.

I care not how extensive and various their reading of good authors may be under their tutor's direction; the more the better; provided sufficient time is left for the daily study of the scriptures. He will improve the differences they will find among learned and spiritual men, into an argument to engage them to study the Bible more closely, and to bring every debated sentiment to be tried and finally determined by that unerring standard. He will teach them to collect the detached portions of truth wherever they meet with them; to borrow from all, but to give themselves up implicitly to the dictates of none. For I know no author who is worthy of the honour of being followed absolutely and without reserve.

7. The next point I am to consider, is the more general course of studies young men should pursue at our national Universities. This might be safely given up to the superior judgment of the

cal or expository strictures, as he goes along. And he will perhaps furnish those students who have taste, with Dr. Lowth's Prælectiones de Poesi Hebræa, which will enable them to judge of the style and idiom of the Hebrew Bible, and particularly of the style and beauties of the Hebrew poetry. Blackwall's Sacred Classics may be added for the Greek.

Much time cannot be allowed for the pursuit of polite literature. But an entrance may be made, and a relish for it acquired, under the direction and restraint of the tutor, which may provide the students with a profitable amusement for leisure hours in future life; for in this species of knowledge, they may advance from year to year. A perusal of such books as Rollin on the Belles Lettres, Bossuet's Universal History, Derham and Ray on the Creation, and a few of our best poets, may suffice while they are students. Other books will occasionally come in their way: for the tutor should have a well-chosen library for the accommodation of his pupils; but he will guard them against spending too much time in this line of reading. For though it has its subordinate advantages, it may, if too much indulged, divert them from the main point. And they should be taught to refer everything they read to the principles of scripture, to the knowledge of the heart of man, and the works, the ways, the wisdom, and the providence of God, otherwise reading will only tend to make them wise in their own conceit.

Students for the sacred ministry should be good

logicians. The logic of the schools is, in a great measure, a cramp, forced, and formal affair, and may possibly have made almost as many pedants and sophists as good reasoners. But Dr. Watts has furnished us with a system of logic in a more intelligible and amiable form, and divested it of the solemn trifling and impertinencies, with which it was encumbered. As the rules of grammar are themselves drawn from the languages they are designed to regulate, so good logic is no more than the result of observations upon the powers of the human mind: and thus we see that many persons of plain good sense are passable logicians, though they never saw a book upon the subject, and perhaps do not understand the meaning of the term.

But pupils at the universities may be much assisted in the habit of thinking, judging, and reasoning, and in disposing their thoughts in an advantageous method, by rules judiciously formed and arranged for that purpose. In this view, I conceive Dr. Watts' logic, with his subsequent Treatise on the Improvement of the Mind, to be very valuable. And, together with the more scientific parts of the subject, he will provide students with a great variety of hints for their conduct, and for distinguishing the principles and conduct of others. These books should be frequently read, and closely studied, and will afford the tutor an extensive scope for their instruction. Unless a man can conceive and define his subject clearly, distinguish and enumerate the several parts of which it consists, and know how

to cast them into a convenient order and dependence, he cannot be a masterly preacher. And though a good understanding may supersede the necessity of logical rules, it will likewise derive advantage from them.

The grand characteristic of the gospel orator is simplicity. Too much attention to the artificial rules of rhetoric, will make, at the best, but an artificial orator. De Fenelon's treatise, however, on pulpit eloquence, may be put into the hands of the pupil with great advantage.

'I have no great opinion of metaphysical studies. For pneumatology and ethics, I would direct pupils to the Bible itself. The researches of literary men in this way, which have not been governed by the word of God, have produced little but uncertainty, futility, or falsehood. A sound tutor will show his pupils how successfully these learned reasoners reciprocally refute each other's hypothesis. And if he informs them more in detail of the extravagancies, which, in different ages, have been started concerning the nature and foundation of moral virtue; or of the dreams of philosophers, some of whom would exclude matter, and others mind out of the universe; he will inform them likewise, that he does not thereby mean properly to add to their stock of knowledge, (for we should in reality have been full as wise if these subtleties had never been heard of,) but only to guard them against being led into the mazes of error and folly, by depending too much on the reveries of philosophers.'

From this short delineation of my plan of education at our universities, it will be seen, that my design is to make it comprehensive and exact. I would have young men learn what is necessary to be known, before they undertake to teach others; and their sufficiency to be evidenced by competent judges of it, before they obtain the necessary passport to office; bearing in mind the well-known observation of Lord Bacon, 'that reading makes a full man, writing an exact man, and speaking a ready man.'

Upon the competency and qualifications of the tutor, much depends: if he be skilful and faithful, he will not only be useful to his pupils considered as individuals, but he will be remotely the instrument of all the blessings and benefits, which God is pleased to communicate by their ministry, in the course of their stated and occasional labours to the end of life. Such a tutor is called to the most honourable and important office that man, in the present state of things is capable of. On the other hand, the errors and prejudices of an incompetent tutor, adopted and perpetuated by his disciples, may produce a long progression of evil consequences, which may continue to operate and multiply, when he, and they, are dead and forgotten. For if the streams which are to spread far and wide throughout a land are poisoned in the very source, who can foresee how far the mischief may be diffused? Unless therefore proper tutors can be procured to give a right momentum and direction to the whole machinery of education,

it would, on many accounts, be better that youth should remain untaught, than that they should be wrongly taught.

And here it must be confessed, that the selection of good and able preceptors is a difficulty of no ordinary kind. Such persons however may be found, some tolerably, and others eminently, qualified to undertake the important task. Although we cannot expect to find an absolutely perfect teacher, any more than we can a faultless and perfect minister, yet we should seek for as large a measure of perfection and capacity, in those whose office it is to train men for the arduous duties of the sanctuary as we can obtain. They should come as nearly as possible to the character I am about to describe.

For his first indispensable qualification, the tutor should possess a mind deeply penetrated with a conviction of the glory, grace, and efficacy, of the gospel of Christ. However learned and able in other respects, unless his heart is attached to the cause of the Redeemer, and his entire dependence placed upon his sacrifice, and obedience unto death, his mediatorial fulness, and his powerful intercession, he is incapacited for the work of instructing those, whose high prerogative it is, to preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ," and the blessedness of his kingdom. His sentiments also should be explicit respecting the depravity of human nature, and the necessity of the influence of the Holy Spirit, to quicken, enlighten, and sanctify those, whom his divine agency leads to

Jesus for salvation;—one who, having been himself taught the deep things of God by the Holy Spirit, 'in a gradual experimental manner,' while he is charmed with the beautiful harmony and coincidence of all the doctrines of the economy of grace, is at the same time aware of the mysterious depths of the divine counsels, and the impossibility of their being fully comprehended by our feeble understandings. Such a man will be patient and temperate in explaining the peculiarities of the Gospel, to his pupils, and will adapt himself to their several attainments and capacities. After the example of Christ, the great teacher, he will consider what they can bear, and aim to lead them forward in such a manner, that the sentiments he instils into them may be their own, and not taken up merely upon the authority of his bare assertion. The Bible must be proposed to them as a consistent whole; and they should be guarded against the extremes into which controversial writers have forced themselves and each other, in support of a favourite hypothesis, so as, under a pretence of honouring one portion of the word of God, to overlook, if not positively to contradict, the truths which are taught with equal clearness in the other.

As it is highly important that every minister of Christ should be versed in useful literature, the tutor must of necessity be a learned man. He should not only be qualified to teach his pupils whatever is requisite for them to learn, but should be possessed of such a fund of general knowledge, that the most forward amongst them may feel he

has a decided superiority over them, in every branch of their studies. Besides, an accurate skill in the most popular classical authors, he should be well acquainted with books at large, and of the state of sound learning and religion, and the memorable events of history in the successive ages of mankind. He should be particularly conversant with ecclesiastical learning; for though it be true that the bulk of it, is little worth knowing for its own sake, yet a tutor possessed of good judgment will select from the whole mass a variety of observations suited to assist young men in forming a right judgment of human nature, of true religion, of its counterfeits, and of the abuses to which the name of religion is capable of being perverted. And he will likewise be able to choose for their use such authors and subjects, as deserve their notice from the surrounding rubbish, with which they are overwhelmed.

A University tutor should also be sufficiently acquainted with the lighter accomplishments, which are designated by the term belles lettres, and a proper judge of them both as it respects their intrinsic and their relative worth. Their real value (to beings who are posting to eternity,) is not very great; and a wise man if he has not been strongly tinctured with them in early life, will seldom think it worth his while, to attend much to them afterwards. Yet in such an age as ours, it is some disadvantage to a man in public life, if he is quite ignorant of them. To a tutor, they are in some degree necessary.

It is moreover desirable that he should have a

lively imagination, under the due regulation of a sound judgment, and a correct and cultivated taste. Otherwise how can he form the taste and judgment of his pupils, or direct or criticise their compositions.

Natural philosophy is a noble science which presents the most interesting and profitable relaxation from the tedium of severer studies. A tutor possessed of this knowledge will have manifold opportunities of pointing out to his pupils 'the signatures of wisdom, power, and goodness, which the all-wise God has impressed upon every part of the visible creation.' But at the same time, he should know where to stop, and what bounds to set to their inquiries on this subject. It is not necessary that either he or they should be numbered amongst the first astronomers or virtuosi of the age. A life devoted to the service of God and the salvation of souls, will not afford sufficient leisure for this diminutive kind of preeminence. A general knowledge will suffice even in the tutor. And while he lectures upon these subjects, he will caution them against spending too much time and thought upon those branches of philosophy, which have but a very remote tendency to qualify them for preaching the everlasting Gospel. They are sent into the world and to the University, not to collect shells and fossils, and butterflies, or to surprise each other with feats of electricity, but to win souls for Christ.

I have said enough generally of the tutor's qualifications for the effective discharge of his

office; and will now say a little with respect to the spirit he should evince, his method of communicating knowledge to his pupils, so as to make it attractive to them, and his manner of conducting himself towards them as a father towards his children.

'He must be didacticos, apt to teach.' Some men possess great knowledge, and yet have not a facility of imparting their ideas to others. It is a talent and gift of God, and will always be found in some degree, in those whom he calls to the tutor's office. He will regard himself as a teacher, not only in the lecture-room, but in every place, and at all times. And he will delight to have his pupils about him, so far as their studies, and his own convenience, will permit.

Two objects he will constantly aim at, to secure their respect and affection. Without maintaining a proper authority, he can do nothing; and unless they esteem him, everything will go on heavily. But if the pupils are well-disposed, such a tutor will be both loved and feared. 'His spiritual and exemplary deportment, his wisdom and abilities, will command their respect. His condescension and gentleness, his tenderness for their personal concerns, his assiduity in promoting their comfort, and doing them every friendly office in his power, will engage their love. These happy effects will be further promoted by their mutual intercourse, by his expository lectures, and by his public ministrations, if he be a preacher. Having his eye fixed on God, and his heart in his work, a bless-

ing from heaven will descend upon himself, and those committed to his care.'

The proper maintenance of strict, yet temperate, judicious, and salutary discipline in the Universities, is as essential to their own welfare and prosperity, as to the promotion of the morals and good habits of those who are educated in them for the work of the ministry. A minister is "a soldier of Jesus Christ, and as such ought to expect, and be willing, to endure restraint and hardship." * It would be well to have this constantly in eye in the preparation of young men for that office. They are not called to be merely gentlemen, but soldiers, who in their spiritually militant capacity, are directed "to fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil." † The due regulation of their spirit, temper, and conduct, will materially assist them in this holy warfare; and the want of it, expose them to defeat and shame. A refractory, licentious, and immoral spirit, is the bane of religion, virtue, and decorum, and all approaches to it, should meet with the punishment it deserves. If corrective discipline is necessary in the army and navy, to ensure subordination and obedience to commanders, is it less requisite, when large bodies of youth are collected together, some of whom may be so depraved, as by their corrupt influence and example, to be able to vitiate the purity of others. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." And this should be guarded against,

* 2 Tim. ii. 3. † Baptismal Service.

with the most sedulous care
The tutor of every college, c
maintain a discreet authority,
and exercise, as far as opportu
vigilant inspection over his
laxity of conduct or practice in
the least degree, tend to impair
ness, or to tarnish the reputatio
in the public estimation.

There are many excellent ru
ties for the correction of vicio
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them to suitable castigation.

Any vicious excess, such
riot, and gross immorality, sho
at in any of the members,
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gress the rules of decency i
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cation, and the third with
The character and efficiency
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England itself, as well as th
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I have only to add, were t
pastoral office, thus educated i
learning, accustomed early t
conduct, they would come

seats of learning, well furnished for the beneficial discharge of it; they would glorify God by their devoted labours in his service; shine as the lights and ornaments of the Church; do much to repress a sectarian spirit, and confer the most substantial blessings on the whole kingdom.*

The appropriate remarks of the poet, well deserve the attention of our universities and seminaries of public learning.

'Now may that blest edifice
Of public good be reared
Which holy Edward traced,
The spotless Tudor, he whom death
Too early summoned to his heavenly throne,
For Brunswick's line was this great work reserved.
For Brunswick's fated line;
They who from Papal darkness and the thrall
Of that worst bondage which doth hold
The immortal spirit chained,
Saved us in happy hour;
Fitly for them was this great work reserved:
So, Britain, shall thine aged monarch's wish
Receive its due accomplishment,
That wish which with the good
(Had he no other praise,)
Through all succeeding times would rank his name,
That all within his realms
Might learn the Book, which all
Who rightly learn shall live.

From public fountains the perennial streams
Of public weal must flow.
O, England! wheresoe'er thy churches stand,
There on that sacred ground
Where the rich harvest of mortality
Is laid, as in a garner treasured up,
There plant the tree of knowledge! Water it

* See Cowper's Tirocinium, Vol. II. p. 253—293.

With thy perpetual bounty! It shall spread
Its branches o'er the venerable pile
Shield it against the storm
And bring forth fruits of life.

Train up thy children England in the way
Of righteousness, and feed them with the bread
Of wholesome doctrine. Where hast thou thy mines
But in their industry!
Thy bulwarks, where but in their breasts?
Thy might, but in their arms!
Shall not their numbers therefore be thy wealth,
Thy strength, thy power, thy safety, and thy pride?
Oh grief then, grief and shame,
If in this flourishing land,
There should be dwellings, where the new-born babe
Doth bring unto its parent's soul no joy!
Where squalid poverty
Receives it at its birth,
And in her withered knees
Gives it the scanty food of discontent!

Queen of the seas enlarge thyself,
Redundant as thou art of life and power,
Be thou the hive of nations,
And send thy swarms abroad.
Send them like Greece of old
With arts and sciences to enrich
The uncultivated earth,
But with more precious gifts than Greece or Tyre,
Or elder Egypt to the world bequeathed;
Just laws and rightful polity,
And crowning all, the dearest boon of heaven,
Its word and will revealed.

Queen of the seas, enlarge thyself,
Send thou thy swarms abroad!
For in the years to come,
Though centuries or millenniums intervene,
Where'er thy progeny,
Thy language, and thy spirit shall be found,
If on Ontario's shores,
Or late explored Missoure's pastures wide,
Or in that austral world long sought,
The many-isled Pacific, yea, where waves,

Now breaking over coral reefs, affright
The venturous mariner.
When islands shall have grown and cities risen,
In Cocoa groves embowered;
Where'er thy language lives,
By whatsoever name the land be called
That land is English still.
Thrones fall, and dynasties are changed;
Empires decay and sink
Beneath their own unwieldy weight;
Dominion passeth like a cloud away,
The imperishable minds,
Survives all meaner things.'

Southey's Poetical Works. Vol. II.

CHAPTER XXI.

ON A SUITABLE DOMESTIC AND SCHOLASTIC EDUCATION FOR YOUTH DESTINED FOR THE SACRED MINISTRY.

I SHALL not undertake to discuss at length the cause and reasons by which young men are attracted to the Church, when they arrive at a certain age. Sometimes, no doubt, it is the result of their own spontaneous choice; but more generally, I suppose, it is the consequence of a parental call, at a very early period, which anticipates it, and determines the matter independent of the will and the inspiration of the Almighty; whose glory, in the important decision, ought to be primarily considered. 'When a boy arrives at the age of twelve or fourteen, the father, amongst other family arrangements, decides upon sending him into the Church; and with this view he is retained at school, until he is of riper years for the University.' Both parties incur great responsibility by the act; and should therefore seriously examine themselves, as to the motives which actuate them in the determination they have made.

Before all things, the parent should scrutinize his own heart, and ask himself the question, 'Do

I propose the glory of God, the good and advancement of his Church, and the benefit of the world, as the paramount object I have in view, by setting my son apart for the clerical office? Do I in my conscience think him qualified to undertake the momentous charge of instructing and saving immortal souls?' If he cannot answer these questions satisfactorily in the affirmative, no prospect of worldly preferment, no secular interest whatever, should prompt him to urge his son to undertake an office, for which he thinks him incompetent; for this would be a criminal affront to God, by an unholy intrusion into his sanctuary, and a deep injury to the Church, no less than to the community at large; for which he must be accountable at the day of judgment.

The youth should then examine himself, as in the presence of the great searcher of all hearts. He should make a solemn appeal to his inmost soul, and ask, 'Am I truly serious in this great affair? am I instigated by ambition, love of ease, or any carnal motive, in aspiring to the ministry? Have I an awakened, experimental sense and perception of the truth, and immense value of the Gospel, as the only efficacious remedy for healing and restoring lost souls to happiness?' This is an important point, which often requires the closest scrutiny to ascertain, especially in young persons. There is often a something in them which resembles this seriousness of mind, which upon an exact trial, does not prove satisfactory. In this difficulty the parties should look to God

for guidance and direction, and then judge a
as they can. But I hope no persuasion or r
mendation, no desire of pleasing or obli
friend, will prevail either on the father or s
choose an office, which only a subject of
grace can rightly execute.

Who would undertake to teach an irra
animal. algebra. mathematics, or classics?
this would be as practicable, as to make
able and faithful preachers, whom the L
heaven. the Head of the Church, has no
made Christians.

Candidates for the ministry must likewise
a good capacity. It is not necessary that
abilities should be of the first rate, (perhap
few of such are really called of God) but
tolerable measure of natural abilities capal
being opened and improved by education,
necessary in the person who deliberately p
being a minister of the Gospel. 'Ex quovis
mercurius non fit.' 'If the heart be change
sanctified by divine grace. a person of the we
natural understanding. will acquire, under
teaching of the Holy Spirit, all that is nece
to enable him to fill up his station in privat
with propriety. to overcome the world, a
make his own calling and election sure.
preacher must have gifts, as well as graces,
able " to divide the word of truth, as a wor
that needeth not to be ashamed."

Now were these things considered as they
to be. many who go into the ministry with

commission from heaven, would be justly alarmed at their presumption, in undertaking an office from which some eminently qualified men have shrunk back with fear and trembling.

1. Parents, who on scriptural grounds determine to devote their sons to the service of the Church, should begin at an early period to cultivate their minds, and instil Christian principles as a foundation for their future advancement in useful learning. After the common elements of the English language have been acquired, the Bible should be read night and morning as their commonplace and text-book. Familiar explanations suited to their years might be given by their domestic tutor, in order that light may be thrown on its more difficult passages. Once a year, at least, the Bible should be perused by the young student, who should be expected to commit its leading facts, circumstances, doctrines, parables, and precepts to memory; and frequent examinations should be instituted, to ascertain what progress has been actually made in this most valuable department of Christian knowledge. Were this practice kept up before youth are sent to school, not only would they be qualified to pursue the important study with advantage there, but be better prepared to make that proficiency in biblical learning which should entitle them to admission at college. In this way, they would imitate the pious Timothy, and obtain a similar encomium to that pronounced by St. Paul on him who "from a child had known the Holy Scriptures, which had

made him wise unto salvatio
Christ Jesus." Three things ar
stitute an acceptable and usef
Gospel, serious prayer and me
truths, together with an accurate
the Old and New Testaments.*
textuary will always have at h
ful knowledge, wherewith to fo
dresses, and feed his people w
bread of eternal life. For wa
the most learned and elabor
preacher, though they may ch
liance and language, will but in
of the hearers, and lead them
dicta of a fallible man, instead o
all-wise eternal God.

This acquaintance with scri
sable; for of what use would i
helm to one who had not lea
the use of the compass; or to c
ment of the ship to an unski
would be the necessary result
ence; but that the vessel, inste
conducted through the boisterou
tined haven, would, through th
former, be dashed against the r
up by the deceitful vortex; or
of the latter, to rescue her from
tion, what could prevent her fro
wreck with the loss of all her ca

* Luther on the qualifications of a C

Will a consummate general, who has to combat a veteran enemy, prefer raw undisciplined recruits, who are ignorant of military tactics, and have never faced a foe, to disciplined troops, who have been accustomed to victory and honour? Can we then wisely employ the scriptural novice in the holy and arduous contest of demolishing the kingdom of Satan, and erecting the glorious empire of Christ on its ruins? Alas, he is unfurnished with panoply divine, and is more likely to make a cowardly retreat from the adversaries of Christ, than to conquer and subdue them.

Useful and easy elementary books on divinity, such as enforce scriptural doctrines and morality, may now engage the attention of the pupil, which will enlarge his stock of theological knowledge, and furnish him with materials for improvement in his subsequent study of a science with which he must hereafter be more thoroughly acquainted.

2. The choice of a school and suitable tutor is a matter of primary importance, now that the pupil is of sufficient age to require a more competent guide to conduct his studies preparatory to his entrance at college. Especial care and circumspection is necessary here, that the pious designs of parents may not be frustrated, by the incompetency of him to whom the instruction of their sons for the sacred office is to be committed.

First, he should be a decidedly pious and good man, whose mind is deeply impressed with the value of eternal things, and will take suitable

pains to imbue his students wit
for, and knowledge of them;
them all the truths of the G
upon them the necessity of
their theological knowledge, a
the scriptures, the fountain-l
righteousness, as possible.
their acquaintance with the
vinity, ecclesiastical history,
graphy, that they may collect
timents and topics, and imbib
them, as may qualify them t
establish themselves more firm
it is in Jesus."

As their advancement in the
is devoutly to be wished, their
discourse with his pupils on
"as God manifest in the flesh,
divine mission to the world, t
sonality of the Holy Ghost, a
all-powerful agency on the h
Christians; and argue its nec
pravity and guilt of their nat
much on the efficacy of the a
and faith in it, as the only
reconciliation with God, and
cause of all holiness and righ
creatures: he will insist on co
holy example, and demonstrat
abroad in the heart, is the
obedience to his commandme
put such treatises in their hand

as will confirm them in the belief of his own scriptural views concerning them.

3. As the minds of the pupils are to be well furnished with useful learning, the tutor should be at least a tolerably well learned man himself, able to initiate them in every branch of sound literature and science; * unless this be the case, how can he be competent to give them even a moderate acquaintance with those studies and pursuits, which will occupy their attention, when they remove to the Universities?

He must be a good classical scholar, duly qualified to ground and advance his noviciates in the knowledge of the best Greek and Latin authors, that they may not be found deficient on their entrance at College. Besides, an acquaintance with books at large, he should have some knowledge of the general state of literature and religion, and the most memorable events of history in the successive ages of mankind.

He should be able to direct their studies in history, sacred and profane; in natural philosophy, and logic, and mathematics; and accustom them to composition, and to give weekly, for his examination, the analysis and outlines of a sermon, which they hear at the parish church. In a word, if he be such a tutor, as I would recommend, he will conscientiously exert himself, to send them to the Universities, so well prepared in every respect, that their "profiting may appear unto all men."

* See remarks on this head on Chapter XIX. to the Universities.

4. The tutor should keep a strict eye upon their morals and deportment. He will not suffer any of his pupils to resist wholesome authority and good discipline, either in his house or in his school. He will not allow them to absent themselves from family worship, or to go abroad after an appointed hour, without his express permission, which should not be given, but for solid and just reasons.

Laxity of manners and immoral conduct, profane and obscene, and polluting conversation, should not escape censure, and suitable correction. Temperate habits, and a mastery over appetite, propriety in dress, a custom of rising early, diligence in study, and the right cultivation of their minds, and talents, will often be advised and insisted on, by the preceptor, in his intercourse with the scholars under his tuition.

Young men thus instructed at home, and taught and disciplined at school, would, with God's blessing, who only (after every acquired fitness) can make a minister of the Gospel, be duly qualified for admission at College; and, under the tuition of a good tutor, there amass such a fund of useful knowledge, as to pass a satisfactory and creditable examination at their ordination; and, in dependance on the grace of Christ, prove "burning and shining lights," dignifying the Church by the purity of their doctrine and life, and scattering amongst the people of their charge, the most substantial blessings for time and eternity.

CHAPTER XXII.

ON UNITY AMONG PROFESSED CHRISTIANS HOLDING THE COMMON FUNDAMENTALS OF DIVINE TRUTH—A PLAN OF COMPREHENSIVE CHARITY TO EMBRACE ALL MODERATE PARTIES BY ADAPTING THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND WITHOUT ANY COMPROMISE OF PRINCIPLE TO THE VIEWS OF PIOUS AND REASONABLE DISSIDENTS FROM HER COMMUNION.

If good men amongst every denomination of Christians, instead of widening their trifling differences on Church government, discipline, rituals and ceremonies, by an uncharitable spirit of bigotry, and party zeal, were to hold an amicable conference together, to ascertain in what they agree, and in what they disagree with each other: it would most probably be found, that there is a greater harmony and concurrence among them, upon all the essential points of true religion, than they are accustomed to imagine. A contentious and factious opposition, on the one side; and an uncharitable and repulsive spirit, on the other; present formidable obstacles to that peace, and charity, and union, which are the distinctive badges of the religion of Jesus Christ; where these are, in a considerable degree, wanting, there is unhallowed rivalry amongst the mystical body of Christ; and there is discord and disunion

amongst those, who should be characterized by their being "of one heart and one soul;" * and by "their dwelling together, as brethren, in unity and godly love." †

1. The most deplorable consequences ensue from these unholy divisions amongst the followers of Christ.

Satan triumphs and accomplishes the object on which he is intently set, namely the weakening of Christ's spiritual kingdom, by setting Christians one against another. His grand maxim and method for injuring the Church militant is, divide et impera; and this he readily effects, by sowing the seeds of discord amongst the disciples of Jesus, to fill them with unrelenting hatred and animosity towards each other. He assiduously scatters the tares of dissension amongst the wheat, in order to impair its quality, and choke it with weeds, that it may become unfruitful.‡ And should we concur in his insidious and malevolent designs, by indulging an uncharitable spirit; or firmly resist his attacks, by unity and love? Surely, it is the bounden duty of the community of Christ to be apprized of "his devices; lest he should get an advantage over them;" and turn it to their injury and destruction.

2. Infidels and bad men of every description, take advantage of our divisions, to justify themselves in a contemptuous rejection of Christianity. 'Can that system, say they, be of God which gen-

* Acts iv. 32. † Psalm cxxxiii. 1.

‡ Matt. xiii. 24—31.

ders strifes and animosities? 'Should not the religion of Jesus, which professes to be one of love and concord, wear a more benignant aspect, than that which it now exhibits, through the contentious rivalry of its avowed friends?' Now, if our want of Christian love and harmony amongst ourselves should but ever so remotely lay a stumbling-block in the way of unbelievers, by preventing their examining and embracing our holy religion, and encouraging their pertinacious opposition to it, what guilt do we incur before God; and what dishonour do we offer to Christ, who "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."*

3. How baneful are the effects of a divided spirit upon professing Christians themselves. It fills those, who should love each other fervently as brethren, with dislike and resentment: alienated from each other, they strive to magnify the points on which they differ, exaggerate on both sides the evils which flow from the views opposite to their own, and controversy becomes bitter and interminable. An intolerant, imperious disposition is disgraceful to the Christian name, for it is calculated only to excite dissension and to perpetuate error. Thus all that is great and venerable is overlooked for what is little, and grand truths of the highest importance, lie buried under a mass of exaggerated and unfair imputations, which keep the disciples of Jesus widely asunder. 'Professed

* 2 Peter iii. 9.

believers are denying each other's right to the Christian name, labouring to extort from the most scanty, or rather the most unfavourable evidence, proofs that Christians are no Christians. They attribute to each other the basest motives, where they are not apparent. They are widening those differences which have already, for gloomy and disgraceful centuries, made an impassable gulf between them. They come into close conjunction with the enemies of the Gospel, to carry on hostilities against its friends. They publish to the world each other's faults: they exaggerate them. They accuse each other of invention and falsehood. They term each other sectarians, rivals, and enemies. They speak, and preach against each other. And those who are peaceable look on at the unholy strife, and do nothing.'

Christian readers, if you feel the love of Christ glowing in your bosoms—if you respect the command of Christ—if you wish for the welfare of the Church—if you desire not to be "partakers of other men's sins"—if you regret that the progress of religion should be arrested in the world, set yourselves, I intreat you, with all your influence of station, and with all your energies of mind, against this discreditable warfare. Separate from violent party men, and unite yourselves cordially and openly with all who manifest the mind which is in Christ. Long ago has this charitable course been enjoined in scripture. "I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have

learned, and avoid them."* "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."† "Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous."‡ "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."§

4. This unhallowed division among professors of religion induces weakness. A body, when its component parts are separated becomes powerless, and incapable of effecting any valuable object: but when all its members are united, harmony, strength, and effective co-operation, produce most desirable results. Each member assists the other, and the combined energy of the whole, accomplishes a work, which both astonishes and delights us. Thus, whilst there are contentions among us, and every one saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ, the Church is torn into petty sections, instead of being a well-compacted body, exerting its concentrated energies to oppose pernicious errors, and maintain truth inviolate.

What a distressing spectacle is then exhibited to the world—each party claiming exclusive possession of truth, sees little else but error in those from whom they differ only in non essentials; and the consequence of this unholy rivalry is, the banishment, to a great extent, of that peace and cha-

* Rom. xvi. 17. † Matt. xxiii. 8—12. ‡ 1 Pet. iii. 8. § Ibid. i. 22.

rity, which ought to subsist amongst all the bers of Christ's universal family.

5. A spirit of union and brotherly love i great desideratum in the Christian Churc unite all hearts and hands, in promoting th tension of Christ's kingdom, throughout the w So long as we are divided into parties and sec the progress of the Gospel will be seriousl tarded, both at home and abroad. Unbeliev our own country, in the growing population o immense colonial empire, and in the differen tions, with whom we have intercourse for com cial purposes, will urge our disagreement am ourselves, as an argument for their neglect o holy religion. Besides, the present porte state of the Church demands union and conc the increase of popery, the growth of heresy u the specious pretext of serving the cause of religion, which it counterfeits, and the alar attitude of infidelity, call for the zealous and bined efforts of christians of all denominatio defeat their malicious projects. The unio christians, "valiant for the truth upon the ear would oppose such a formidable weapon ag the hostility of the enemies of the Church, as could not successfully resist. Then God w interpose remarkably in her behalf, and say, weapon that is formed against thee shall pros and every tongue that shall rise against the judgment thou shalt condemn."† "And wha

* Jer. ix. 3. † Isaiah liv

imposing aspect would she present to the whole world? Of all spectacles, not one would be more sublime and lovely than the Church of Christ, if it were what he intended it to be. Rescued at an incalculable cost from inconceivable ruin by divine love, Christians are meant to represent in the midst of the prevailing selfishness of the world, the love of Christ. "By this says the founder of our religion, shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another." Millions of persons of every conceivable variety of tempers, habits, and interests, attached to every class of society, filling all sorts of situations, speaking different languages, and inhabiting widely-separated countries, all united in brotherly love, living to promote the glory of God, in doing the greatest possible good to each other and to the world—that is what the Church should be."

6. It would, I conceive, be highly desirable to adopt some such plan of comprehensive charity as should embrace all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth. "All practical believers in Christ—all real, vital, experimental christians are united in the fundamental verities of their common faith. Let them submit to the guidance of true christian love, and they will have no difficulty in agreeing in such confessionals and rituals, as shall, by a clear and uncompromising assertion of heavenly truths, at once exclude pernicious heresies, and banish all grounds for doubtful disputations."

"My heart's desire, therefore, and prayer to God for Israel is, that those stumbling-blocks,

which now keep so large a body of our countrymen, as three millions of dissenters, out of the pale of the Church, should be deeply, impartially, and patiently considered, by the fit and proper tribunal: in the spirit of prayer, and of christian love, of peace, of charity, and of conciliation. After such a consideration and revision, and without making one unrighteous and unscriptural concession, the Church will no longer number as opponents or as strangers, men like Howe, Owen, Baxter, Calamy, Doddridge, Watts, Henry, Hall. Such men are the salt of the earth. No system can be entirely wise or safe which excludes them from its bosom."*

The venerable Bishop Burnet was equally solicitous to bring about so desirable a union, and shews in what spirit it should be attempted, if we desire to have it really accomplished. "There is a great deal of flaming zeal about matters, in which more gentleness and a milder temper would both look better, and more effectually compass that which is designed by it; I mean the bringing the Dissenters into our communion. Bitter railings, and a rough behaviour, cannot make many converts. To study the grounds of their separation thoroughly, to answer them calmly and solidly, and to treat their persons with all gentleness, expressing no uneasiness at the liberty granted them by law, is a method that will never fail of succeeding to a great degree, especially on the rising ge-

* Lord Henley's Plan of Church Reform, p. 9—12.

neration. Other methods do confirm their prejudices, and heighten their aversion to those who treat them as enemies, on design to ruin them, and not as friends on design to gain them."*

7. 'I am no advocate for that spurious and miscalled liberality, which can compromise the essence and life of Christianity. One of the first duties in the eye of the sincere and true believer, is that of "earnestly contending for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." He therefore can never be so "unequally yoked" as to mix with the man who denies the divinity of our Lord, or the mystery of the triune Jehovah; for "what communion hath light with darkness?" Again, though admitting the Romanist to all civil rights, yet he can never have spiritual fellowship with him, as long as it is his boast and happiness to have escaped from the bondage of an idolatrous and apostate Church, "into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

It would also be vain to hope that under the present dispensation of events, the dissent even of many pious and excellent men can ever be entirely eradicated. The evils of discord and schism must remain as thorns in the sides of the Church, during the whole course of her militant state on earth.

But the subjects and causes of dissent may surely be confined within narrower limits. Some healing and charitable measures of peace and com-

* Bishop Burnet's Pastoral Care, p. 6, 7.

prelacies may be resorted to in matters of discipline and Church government, in rituals, and those points of doctrine which are not essential to salvation. We may, to some extent at least, close "the breaches and repair the old waste places."*

Such equitable measures would undoubtedly draw numbers of candid enlightened dissenters into the Church, and leave prejudiced and bigoted zealots amongst them, without any sufficiently valid reason for their non-communion with it.

In order to facilitate the admission of our dissenting brethren into the Church, let us impose no harsh conditions as the ground of their communion with us. Let us not seek to 'annul their baptisms, or think that they ought to be baptized again in a more regular manner, before they can be accounted Christians;' such a spirit towards them would appear harsh and repulsive, and defeat the proposed object.†

And further, should any of their ministers of sound Christian principles, desire to officiate within the walls of the establishment; upon a testimonial of their piety and good character, and fitness for the ministry, let them be cordially welcomed, and their entrance made as easy as possible, without their submitting to a long period of probation, which, if insisted on, would, in some cases amount to a sentence of exclusion.

I will conclude this feeble attempt to unite all pious minds in support of our common Christianity,

* Lord Henley, p. 10—12. † Burnet's Pastoral Care.

against all its adversaries, in the charitable language of Dr. Chalmers, the friend of harmony and peace. 'When the difference between the Church and sectaries is so insignificant, why keep up that difference at all? We hear of their common faith, that is, of their agreement with the Church, on all vital and essential topics. But if they agree in all that is essential, what is the character of the topics on which they differ? There can be no other reply to this, than that they must be the non-essentials of Christianity—the nugæ triviales, if not the nugæ difficiles, of doctrine or government—the caprices, or whimsical peculiarities, in which, through the very wantonness of freedom, in this land of perfect toleration, men have chosen to besport themselves, and so broken forth into their party-coloured varieties; each having a creed, or rather I would say, (for substantially speaking nine-tenths of the people in Britain have all the same creed) each having a costume and designation of their own.'

I will not relinquish the hope of a consummation to all these differences; and that some high achievement of charity, a great and noble sacrifice at the shrine of true Christian patriotism, is still awaiting us. When once the habit of the Christian world is to think more on their articles of agreement, and less on their articles of difference; or in other words, when they come to think more on that which is great, and less on that which is little—when principles on the one hand, and points on the other, shall hold their just relative propor-

tion and place in the estimation of men, then will the gravitating power which unites bodies to a common centre, prevail over the repulsions which are almost all associated with the now rapidly fading, and we trust soon to be forgotten wrongs of former ages.

When once the Church of England shall have come down from all that is transcendental or mysterious in her pretensions, and quitting the plea of her exclusive apostolical derivation, shall rest more upon that wherein the real greatness of her strength lies—the purity of her doctrines—her deeds of high prowess and championship in the battles of the faith, the noble contributions which have been rendered by her scholars and her sons to that Christian literature, which is at once the glory and defence of Protestantism—the ready-made apparatus of her churches and parishes—the unbroken hold which, as an establishment, she still retains on the mass of society—and her unforfeited possessory right to be reckoned and deferred to as an establishment still. When these, the true elements of her legitimacy and power come to be better understood; in that proportion will she be recognized as the great standard and rallying-post, for all those who would unite their efforts, and their sacrifices in that mighty cause, the object of which is to send throughout our families in more plentiful supply, those waters of eternal life which can alone avail for the healing of the nations.

But the best and highest sacrifice of all were by the Dissenters of England, those representatives

and descendants of the excellent ones of the earth —the Owens, and Flavels, and Howes, and Baxters, and Henrys, of a by-gone age—who rejoiced to hear of all the Christianity which there was in the Church; and to see all which the Church did, if done but for the Christian good of the people. We speak not of the sin of schism, of which we have sometimes heard, in language far too strong for any sympathy or even comprehension of ours. But we speak of the blessings of unity; and we confess how greatly more it is endeared to us, since made to perceive, that only by an undivided Church, can a community be out and out pervaded, or a territory be filled up and thoroughly overtaken with the lessons of the gospel. Tell, whether it is of greater consequence that minor differences be upholden, or that the universal Christian education of our families shall be provided for? But in truth these minor differences may co-exist with the operations of an effective establishment. We want not to overbear the consciences of dissenters; but if possible disarm their hostility to an institute, of which we honestly believe that its overthrow were tantamount to the surrender, in its great bulk and body, of the Christianity of our nation.*

A PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR UNITY.

'O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace: Give us

* Dr. Chalmers' Lectures on the Establishment, p. 72—75.

grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord: that as there is but one body, and one spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'

CHAPTER XXIII.

ON THE SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE OF THE MILLENNIUM OR LATTER DAY GLORY—THE PECULIAR DUTY OF THE CHURCH AND OF CHRISTIANS PROSPECTIVELY WITH REGARD TO IT.

1. RESPECTING the precise nature of the millennium and the grand events which are to be consequent upon it, divines have been greatly divided. What has been advanced on the all-important subject by wild enthusiasts and visionaries, I shall pass over without the least notice. But the two leading sentiments held concerning it by pious and judicious men may properly be stated. One class of theologians have thought that there will really be a literal resurrection of saints and martyrs, who shall again live upon the earth a thousand years, and that the Lord Jesus Christ also will come down from heaven to reign personally over them during that period. Another class conceive the resurrection spoken of Rev. xx. 6. to be entirely figurative, and that it imports no more than that for the space of a thousand years there will arise a succession of holy men, resembling the saints and martyrs of former ages: and that the spiritual kingdom of Christ will for that period be universally established throughout the world. I have no hesitation in saying, that in my opinion this latter

sentiment, the spiritual reign of Christ, through the prevalence of his gospel and grace, is by far the most just and scriptural.

Under such a persuasion I shall treat scripturally on the millennium, as importing a thousand years happiness on earth, flowing from the general diffusion of spiritual knowledge, piety, and righteousness.

This doctrine is evidently not of modern invention; for it was believed and taught by the earliest Fathers of the primitive Christian church, however they might have differed in their opinions respecting it. Afterwards, in succeeding ages, it fell into neglect; and then it was revived, at the memorable era of the reformation. But the abuse made of it at that time by extravagant sectaries to propagate their own conceits, and to graft thereon the most absurd and pernicious theories, soon brought it into unmerited contempt. The abuse of a thing however offers no valid reason against the sober and legitimate use of it. And hence the doctrine has within the last thirty years drawn forth great attention not only from the students of prophecy particularly, but from all denominations of Christians generally; by whom it is regarded not as a speculative opinion, but as an article of faith, which, when duly improved, cannot fail to animate our hopes of celestial glory, and to awaken our gratitude and joy. Improbable as this event may appear to some, there is scarcely any other so frequently and plainly foretold in the prophetic writings as this. David in a Psalm,

where he not only speaks of Christ, but even personates him, says, "All the ends of the earth shall remember themselves and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him: for the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations." * And in another Psalm, on the same subject, he says, "Christ shall have dominion from sea to sea: all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him." † To cite all that Isaiah speaks to this effect would be to repeat whole chapters. I shall content myself with quoting one verse; "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." ‡ Jeremiah confirming at the same time the truth we have been insisting on, shews that it will principally consist in the knowledge of the most high God; "in that day they shall no more teach every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest of them, saith the Lord." § Daniel assures us that the kingdom which God himself will then erect "shall break in pieces all adverse powers, and fill the whole earth." ‖ Zechariah tells us in order to show the universality of Christ's dominion, "that the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." ¶ The apostles also, and our Lord himself, add their testimony; St. Paul affirms, not only that "the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought

* Psalm xxii. 27, 28. † Ibid. lxxii. 8—12. ‡ Isa. xi. 9.
§ Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. ‖ Dan. ii. 44. ¶ Zech. xiv. 9.

n," but that "the Jews shall be again engrafted n their own olive tree."* And our Lord and Saviour says, "that all Jews and Gentiles shall be one fold under one shepherd."† St. John, passing over the intermediate space of time, repre-ents the angels in heaven as already rejoicing in the accomplishment of this event, and saying, "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."‡

Some events, of no ordinary importance to the future prosperity of the Christian Church will precede and pave the way for the introduction of the latter day glory. First, the destruction of the two great apostacies, Mahommedanism and Popery, which were manifested and attained their acme about the same time, is to take place preparatory to the millennium. Mahomet, or the Eastern Antichrist, retired to his cave at Mecca in the year 606, to compose the forgeries of the Koran. And in the same year, the Western Antichrist, the Pope of Rome, arrived at the zenith of his power, for then the Bishop of Rome was proclaimed universal Bishop of the eastern and western churches. Now, as Daniel and St. John assign a period of twelve hundred and sixty years§ for the continuance of these antichristian powers: provided the right period for the commencement of their tyrannical and cruel reign has been fixed on, we may

* Rom. xi. 24, 25. † John x. 16. ‡ Rev. xi. 15.
§ Dan. vii. 25: xii. 7. Rev. xii. 6.

perhaps look for their destruction about the year 1866.

Although it would be presumptuous to dogmatize with regard to the precise time when the event will take place, yet we are not without striking evidence of its rapid approach. The general scope of prophecy, so far as it designates the millennial period, points, if I may so speak, to this very age in which we live for the accomplishment of that mighty spiritual revolution, which shall then be brought about, by the omnipotent God of heaven.

The 1260 years above mentioned, are, beyond all doubt, near to their completion; and consequently the reign of Christ on earth, by the diffusion of gospel light and grace, as its universal monarch, is near to its commencement; yea, "it is nigh even at the door." *

Besides, amongst both Jews and Gentiles there is a general expectation that some great and beneficial change is at hand, and that God will shortly interpose to bring all nations to such an unity in religious faith and practice, as has never yet been realized. Then the Christian Church, now split into various sections, "will walk worthy of the vocation wherewith it is called; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," it will constitute one body, governed more perfectly by the Spirit of God: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is

* Mark xiii. 29.

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whom "the whole body fitly
compacted by that which e
according to the effectual wor
of every part, maketh increas
the edifying itself in love."*

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whole christian world for the
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Already Jehovah has crowned
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God," and which "is mighty
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* Eph. iv. 1—1

casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." By means of the perusal of the scriptures in their own language, the Jews have been excited to seek the Messiah; and not a few of their Rabbies, with a considerable number of Israelites dispersed throughout the four quarters of the globe, openly avow their belief in him as the Son of God, on whom all their hopes of salvation depend.

Thus the actual progress of christian truth, throughout the world, and the commencement of a work of grace in many portions of it, where nothing but heathen darkness reigned till within the last forty years, justify a rational hope that we begin to see the dawn of millennial "light, which will shine more and more till the arrival of the perfect day."

2. The conversion of the Jews nationally, which is the subject of so many prophecies, will usher in that most joyful period.

God purposes to display his mercy to the Jewish nation. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their Fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel:

After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

For thus saith the Lord God. Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.†

The Lord of Hosts, by the mouth of his prophet Zechariah, declares by what means and agency he will effect the restoration of the lost sheep of the house of Israel: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication; and they shall look on me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born."‡

Jesus assures us that the Israelitish nation *is* given up for a specific time by the judgment of

* Jer. xxxi. 31—35, 8—10. † Ezek. xxxiv. 11—31.
‡ Zech. xii. 10.

God to the tyranny of its enemies; "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."*

St. Paul adverts to the same animating theme, when he says, "for I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob, for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."†

Now if the recovery of but one lost soul occasions so much joy amongst the angels of God; oh what indescribable delight will fill their bosoms, when they see a whole nation cast off for nearly two thousand years on account of their transgressions, returning to God, and sharing with themselves the bliss of his heavenly kingdom! And what will be the sensations of the penitent Jews themselves! When they consider the full extent of their demerit, and the immense mercy of God their Saviour towards them, will they not unitedly exclaim, "Hallelujah, salvation to God and the Lamb?"‡

3. The fulness of the conversion of the Gentiles will be, most probably, almost simultaneous with the repentance and restoration of Israel. And it is not unreasonable to suppose, that the Jews,

* Luke xxi. 24. † Rom. xi. 25. ‡ Rev. vii. 10.

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This is, indeed, a clear pr
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time when Zechariah delive
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others, in order that they
might be partakers with the
his salvation. Besides, the
the different languages o
which they now reside,

* Zech viii. 22, 23. † S

nitent Jews to address them in their own tongues, and proclaim "the wonderful works of God."

"When the Lord shall give the word, great will be the company of those who shall be ready to publish it."*

What an honour will God thus put upon Israel, in making it the dispenser of his truth and mercy to the Pagan world! How ardently should we pray for their repentance, that "all the ends of the earth may see the salvation of God."

Christ having thus accomplished the destruction of his enemies, and converted by the rod of his power both Jew and Gentile, will triumph most gloriously over Satan and all the malicious attempts of his agents, by imposing an effectual restraint upon his power; † so that he shall not be able, as he has done for thousands of years, "to deceive the nations" by inducing them to renounce the worship of the true God, and substitute idolatry, and superstition, and error, instead of the verities of the everlasting gospel. Jesus will now establish his own empire of righteousness and peace throughout the habitable globe. Heresy, erroneous doctrine, and every system of false religion, will vanish before the resistless splendour of Christianity, which will then universally prevail. And what will be its genuine effects and accompaniments?

The millennium will be marked by a general

* Psalm lxviii. 11. † Rev. xx. 1—3.

diffusion of saving knowledge
fall men's minds have been da
qualify them for understanding
of God, or offering him that ho
requires. This moral ignoran
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God, and Jesus Christ whom
be the Saviour of the world.
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divine knowledge will afford an
dy for the removal of those
evils, which have for so many
polluted the world. This is
the words of the prophet: "
nor destroy in all my holy mou
shall be full of the knowledge
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perfections will be better und
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and in truth," from the rising o
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his bright and holy example
tated by his subjects.

4. Righteousness of life will

† 1 Cor. viii. 1.

characteristic of the Church of Christ at that day. The world, which has heretofore been the theatre, on which every species of vice, and every act of wickedness has been exhibited, will, during the thousand years of the triumph of Christianity, be converted into an earthly paradise, wherein truth and holiness will produce all their lovely fruits. Men being made righteous by renewing grace will act according to the golden rule of their heavenly Lord; "whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye unto them, for this is the law and the prophets." * Acting under the influence of this divine principle, instead of fraud and selfishness, integrity and disinterested benevolence and a spirit of Christian love and concord, will predominate amongst all the members of the vast family of man. Then the beautiful scene depicted so glowingly by Isaiah, will be fully realized: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." † All the cruel dispositions of unrenewed men, will then be subdued, whilst mercy,

* Matt. viii. 12.

† Isa. xi. 6—10.

kindness, and justice, will mark the behaviour of one man towards another.

5. Universal peace will be consequent on the pacific reign of Christ. Ever since men apostatized from God, they have been hostilely inclined towards each other. War has been reduced to a science, and every method which a sanguinary ingenuity could devise, has been resorted to by warriors, to destroy those opposed to them in battle. Thus oceans of blood have been wantonly spilt, either to gratify a lust of dominion, and a love of conquest, or to establish a doubtful right.

When Christ, "the Prince of peace," shall set up his millennial kingdom, this state of warfare shall cease; for "the work of righteousness shall be peace: and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." * "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." †

Slavery, with all its dire and ferocious attendants, will be unknown; and the person of every man be regarded as sacred and inviolable, which the hand of cold-blooded avarice must not touch.

6. The happiness resulting from this glorious reign of Christ our Lord, will be greatly augmented by the security afforded to life and property. Men will not then live in dread of each

* Isa. xxxii. 15—17. † Ibid. ii. 2—5.

other; "for they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it." *

7. As sin introduced sickness and death, there is every reason to believe that this triumph of righteousness over vice, will largely diminish the sum of physical evil, and effectually tend to promote men's health, and prolong their lives. In consequence of which it is highly probable that the world will then be remarkably populous. Neither the scourge of war, nor malignant disease, nor intemperance, will depopulate the walks of life; nor will a vicious or prudential celibacy, defeat the purpose of God, that "men should multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion." †

8. The earth will become remarkably fruitful at the millennium, in a degree known only to Adam before the curse was pronounced upon it. "God makes a fruitful land barren for the wickedness of them that dwell therein." Contrast the present sterility of Canaan with its former fruitfulness, and we may learn, that the direct way for a nation to ensure good harvests, is to "fear God and keep his commandments." At this wished-for period, the piety of the world will draw down the blessing of heaven; and thus poverty and want will be unknown, and plenty and prosperity gladden every heart. The promise made to Israel at the time of

* Zech. iii. 10. † Gen. i. 28.

its restoration, will be extended in its benefits to all the world; "and it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel." *

What a happy state then will the prevalence of Christianity introduce on earth: all the dreams of the ancient poets concerning their fabled Elysium, or their golden age of carnal delights, will be infinitely surpassed by the real blessedness diffused amongst men through the power of true religion. 'Every man will then try to alleviate, instead of adding to, the unavoidable sorrows of all around him. The hope of glory, the prospect of a happy entrance into heaven, and the abundant consolations of the Holy Spirit, will render sickness, death, and the loss of beloved friends, far more tolerable than at present: while communion with God, and "the communion of the saints," all being of one heart in the worship and service of God, will make religion a constant feast to their souls, a source of happiness only inferior to heavenly felicity, because it will not be eternal, nor absolutely perfect.'

From the scriptural views taken in this chapter; notwithstanding the wild and extravagant notions entertained by some at the Reformation, and the absurd opinions advanced by some modern writers on the subject, which have rendered the very

* Hosea ii. 21, 22.

name of it contemptible to numbers; we have as just grounds to expect such a happy event, at the appointed time, as the Jews had to look for a Messiah. But they who imagine it will be a carnal millennium abounding with merely sensual gratifications, are as much mistaken, as the Jews were in waiting for a temporal deliverer: for "the kingdom of God, whenever it shall be established and triumph on earth, will not consist "in meat and drink; but in righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," * demonstrating the truth of our Saviour's assertion, that (the happiness of) "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," † but in the favour and blessing of Almighty God upon his soul.

The Church of England is eminently adapted as a national institution, with vast resources, for extending the spiritual empire of Christ. By means of her commercial intercourse with all parts of the known world, she has great facilities for spreading Christian knowledge amongst unenlightened nations. What then is her bounden duty, and what the position she should take, in prospect of the speedy approach of the millennium? The answer is obvious; she should awake and put forth all her energies in the cause of Christ. She should do every thing in her power to hasten this long wished-for and auspicious period. Her hierarchy, priests, deacons, and members, should emulate

* Rom. xiv. 17. † Luke xii. 15.

each other in holy exertions for the conversion of the world to the knowledge of the true God. And to stimulate our efforts, let us reflect, that if we decline the honourable enterprize, others will come forward and take the work out of our hands, to whom it especially belongs. And then we shall justly incur the deserved malediction of Meroz: "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." *

Is not our Church evidently a missionary Church in her spirit and aspirations? In the prayers which she constantly presents to the throne of God, she sighs for the millennial coming of Christ to bless the world. Can she consistently offer the following petitions for his spiritual advent, whilst she employs no adequate means to accelerate its arrival: "God be merciful unto us and bless us; and shew us the light of his countenance, and be merciful unto us; that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations." "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." "O merciful God, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor wouldest the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live; have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics, and take from them

* Judges v. 23.

all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word and commandment, and so fetch them home blessed Lord, to thy flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.'

To shew the capability of the established Church for diffusing the knowledge of Christianity amongst all mankind, only glance at the extensive territories, the vast colonial possessions of Great Britain; her dominions extending from east to west, from north to south, embrace considerably more than a fifth of the population, territory, resources, and wealth of the habitable globe. Mistress of the ocean, and covering the sea with her ships, which return to her ports richly laden with the valuable produce of distant climates, she has attained an eminence which renders her the envy and admiration of the whole world: so that she is more distinguished for national greatness, than Greece and Rome in all the zenith of their glory.

But for what special purposes in the dispensations of a wise providence has this immense naval and military ascendency been accorded to her? Surely not that she might only accumulate the treasures of the world, and impoverish other nations, to gratify a sordid and insatiable avarice. Nebuchadnezzar, and Alexander, and the Roman and Egyptian conquerors, did this, and gloried for a while in their shame; but they were soon des-

pulled of their riches and splendour by those very nations whom they had robbed, to glut their secular ambition. Let us learn from their ignoble example, not to prostitute our talent to selfish objects, but to employ it for the promotion of his honour, who has confided the important trust to our care. Then shall we surely be "a great nation, a wise and understanding people," as distinguished for the favour of God, and as illustrious for our piety, and righteousness, and benevolence, as for our prowess in arms, and our superiority in the arts and sciences. "If we have so abundantly received the carnal things" of the nations, whom our ships visit, is it a great thing, an unreasonable compensation, that we should liberally scatter amongst them a suitable portion of those spiritual and imperishable treasures, which, the king of heaven, has sent down to us, not to be monopolized by ourselves, but to be widely distributed amongst all mankind, who claim our sympathy and love.

It is then manifestly incumbent upon the British Church and people to take the lead in the blessed work of evangelizing "the world that lieth in wickedness," and to help it forward by every practicable and judicious effort. God works by means and agents to accomplish his divine purposes, both in nature and grace. And however fixed the times and seasons may be in his infinitely wise mind, it is by the use of ordinary means that he now invariably effects his gracious designs. The first advent of Christ was proclaimed by his pre-

cursor, John the Baptist, who, by his ministrations "made ready a people prepared for the Lord." And we in like manner are to act as heralds and harbingers of Messiah's second advent. As pioneers we must precede, remove obstructions, and "prepare his way." By us must the path be levelled, in order to facilitate his march, and to make strait in the desert a highway for our God. Through the instrumentality of men shall every valley be exalted, and every mountain and hill be made low; and the crooked things be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: yea, by a voice crying in the moral wilderness of the world, shall all this be done: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."*

Let our universities and seminaries of useful learning send forth pious and well educated men to conduct the grand enterprize. Will it not greatly add to the renown which they have acquired to raise up a consecrated band of holy men qualified to proclaim "the unsearchable riches of Christ" amongst the perishing heathen, and to bring both Jew and Gentile into his heavenly fold? And can the aspirants after immortal glory adopt a more rational method of securing their object, than by endeavouring "to bless unenlightened nations, by turning them from their iniquities," to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, even Jesus, which delivereth

* Isa. xl. 3—6.

us from the wrath to come." Let the candidates for the sacred ministry of the Gospel, answer to this powerful appeal, and cheerfully respond to the importunate cry of the heathen, "come over and help us."* And "great will be their reward in heaven;" for they that be wise to win souls for the Redeemer "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."†

God has given us every encouragement to proceed in our endeavours to advance this glorious work. The religious societies, which by his gracious providence, have been already established, shew in what particular line we may direct our efforts to the greatest advantage. The Bible, that efficient missionary, by being translated into so many different languages of the world, and by its circulation to the ends of the earth, is obviously the first and most important method of diffusing the knowledge of salvation amongst all the nations. It "testifies to all repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,"‡ as the ground of their acceptance with heaven. By its exhibition of Christ crucified, and the promises of mercy held forth to those who believe in him, and walk agreeably to his will, it is calculated to attract all men to seek repose under the shadow of his wings.

Missionary Societies are in full activity, sending forth pious men to "preach the everlasting gospel," and to explain to benighted nations the

* Acts xvi. 9. † Dan. xii. 3. ‡ Acts xx. 21.

glorious mysteries which are revealed therein. Let these machines be enlarged, and worked by sufficient hands, to make them commensurate with the exigencies of the heathen world. Then may we reasonably expect " that the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them ; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing : the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God."* At last, after a long period of criminal neglect, attention begins to be paid to that wonderful people, " the lost sheep of the house of Israel." God as I have already shown will make use of them, for bringing in the happy era before described : " the fulness of the Jews will be the riches of the world ; and the receiving of them will be to the whole world as life from the dead." † To aid these institutions by our liberal pecuniary contributions, and especially by our prayers, to bring down the divine blessing upon them, is the most effectual step we can take to usher in the millennium. And should we not be favoured to see the completion of the sacred temple ourselves, that privilege will probably be vouchsafed to our children, and we shall have the satisfaction of having made provision for it, as David did, for the material temple, and receive from God the same approbation of our pious efforts,

* Isa. xxxv. 1, 2. † Rom. xi. 11—16.

which he gave to that devoted monarch, saying, "nevertheless ye did well that ye had it in your heart."*

Again, let us frequently anticipate, by devout meditations, this blessed time, and place its glories before our eyes. Abraham felt inexpressible delight in the prospect of our Saviour's first advent. And shall not we, with similar emotions of joy, look forward to the period when he shall come in his millennial power to regenerate the world! Even in heaven this is already a ground of exceeding great joy;† and should it not be a far greater cause of exultation to us, who hope, "in a very little while," to participate in all the blessings which he is coming to bestow?

Moreover, let us sincerely pray to God to hasten this long-wished for day. We are directed by the highest authority to pray, "Thy kingdom come." And it is in answer to effectual fervent prayer, that "God will pour out his Spirit from on high" to effect that moral revolution in the minds of men, which will constrain them to love him "with all their hearts, and their neighbours as themselves." It is by the agency of the Holy Spirit alone applying the truths of the gospel to the heart, that this important change can be wrought on a lost world.‡ And when his omnipotent influences are exerted, through the instrumentality of his faithful ministers, greater Pentecostal conversions shall be effected in every quarter of the globe, than

* 1 Kings viii. 17, 18. † Rev. xii. 10—12. ‡ Zech. iv. 6.

the infant Church was allowed to see at Jerusalem. "A nation shall be born in a day:* and the whole earth rescued from the usurped domination of the prince of darkness, " shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." Every true philanthropist will join in the benevolent supplication of the beloved apostle, saying, "even so come, Lord Jesus; come quickly." †

A PRAYER FOR THE QUEEN AND ROYAL FAMILY.

O LORD, our heavenly Father, thy goings forth have been from everlasting to everlasting! Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the Majesty: for all that is in the heaven, and the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all: for thou doest according to thy will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay thy hand, or say unto thee, what doest thou? Most graciously we beseech thee to behold and bless our most illustrious Sovereign Lady Queen Victoria. Constantly endow and replenish her with the graces of thy Holy Spirit, with a lively faith in the merits of

* Isa. lxvi. 8. † Rev. xxii. 20.

Christ her Redeemer, and with an assured hope of salvation through his all-efficacious atonement, that she may alway incline to thy will, and walk stedfastly in thy most righteous ways. O Lord, deliver her in the hour of temptation and danger; and shield her with thine omnipotent power against all the devices of her enemies, whether foreign or domestic. Prosper her with all happiness. Bless her arms by sea and land. Inspire her soldiers with true courage in the day of battle, that she may vanquish and overcome all her foes; and, having lived to thy glory on earth, by the exhibtion of a pious and virtuous example to all her subjects, may she on her dismission from this vale of tears, exchange an earthly crown, for a crown of righteousness that fadeth not away.

Bless her Consort, his Royal Highness, Prince Albert. Endue him with the constraining influences of thy Holy Spirit, enrich him with thy heavenly grace; give him all the consolations of thy sacred word, that he may so pass through things temporal, as finally to lose not the things which are eternal.

Look propitiously we beseech thee, O Lord, on the Princess Royal, and Albert Prince of Wales, the presumptive heir to the throne of this nation. Watch over them during the helpless years of infancy and

childhood, and as they advance in years, may they, like thy blessed Son Jesus Christ, increase daily in wisdom and stature, and be in favour with God and man.

Grant these things, O Lord, for the sake of our Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR THE KINGDOM IN GENERAL.

Almighty and eternal God, we humbly beseech thee to bestow thine especial grace upon all sorts and conditions of men, that they may serve thee acceptably in the gospel of thy dear Son. More especially we pray that every one fearing God and working righteousness, may honour the Queen of these realms, respect her just authority, and live conformably to the laws, that thus the blessing of heaven may descend on the nation, and that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established amongst us through all generations. May every member of the community, remembering that solemn account which he must one day give to the omniscient judge, duly consider his responsibility, and give all diligence to add to his faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity; that by so doing he may make his calling and election sure; and that thus an entrance may be ministered unto him abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And this we beg for the honour of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, and Mediator. Amen.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ON THE TEMPORALITIES OF THE CHURCH—THE AMOUNT OF ITS REVENUES—THE MISAPPLICATION OF THEM—THE NECESSARY REMEDY FOR THE EVIL.

'A conviction has been gaining ground amongst the best friends of the Church, that several corruptions exist in its temporal administration, which secularize and debase its spirit, contract the sphere of its usefulness, and loosen its hold on the affections and veneration of the people. They consider that its well-being depends upon a timely and judicious correction of abuses, which some affirm to be of such a nature and magnitude, as to threaten its existence as an establishment. And it is frequently declared, that the time has arrived, when the appointed guardians of its interests should come forward with some more extensive and vital measure of Reformation, than any which has yet been communicated to the country.

'Many however of the wise and good amongst her members, while they are deeply conscious of the existence of these evils, are, nevertheless afraid to countenance an efficacious plan of reform, lest the whole of the venerable fabric should be endangered in the process of its reparation. A

and chapters, were thrown into a common fund, it would not furnish a net annual stipend of £350. to each of the working clergy. 'He would never therefore consent, in answer to the unreasonable clamours of her rapacious enemies, to see the smallest portion of it subtracted from the service of the sanctuary of the Most High God." He would regard such an act by whomsoever it might be sanctioned or perpetrated, as the basest sacrilege and spoliation, which would subject the perpetrators of it to the just displeasure of the King of heaven.

The present time appears peculiarly suitable for a calm and dispassionate consideration of this momentous subject. "It requires but little experience to be well aware, that power rarely reforms itself." 'So, indeed, it is,' said Mr. Burke, 'when all is quiet around it.' But may it not be hoped, that a due attention on the part of those in whose hands the issues of this great question are placed, to the state and prospects of society, may for once make an exception to this undoubted rule? When they observe the voice of the nation demanding in every public functionary, a higher degree of zeal and purity, and public virtue, when (they see) that abuses are no longer deemed sacred, because they are become venerable for their antiquity, nor improvements to be rejected as rash and chimerical, because they are extensive, may they not be induced to do "early and from foresight," and with due caution, and temper, and deliberation, that which every prudent man perceives must be soon

done in one way or another, "to avert a great national calamity." Let us indulge a hope that considerations like these, and the recollection of past mistakes in so long resisting the just desires of a nation thirsting for improvement and reformation, may render those who "ride upon the high places of the earth" more humble and tolerant, more attentive to the just demands of the governed, and more observant of those claims which the varying condition of society is daily advancing. How obvious was it to all temperate and impartial spectators, that, as soon as Parliament had recovered from the agitation of the Catholic Question, the first object that would occupy its attention would be that of Parliamentary Reform. How moderate would then have been the demands of its most ardent advocates: how slight the concessions which would have satisfied the just expectations of the nation! And yet with what pertinacity were the most temperate alterations resisted, and how wide and extensive, and in the judgment of many how hazardous, is the measure which this pertinacity produced! *

Let us be duly admonished by past experience, for it "is impossible to regard the temper of the nation and of the times without being convinced that one of the first questions agitated in every reformed parliament will be the extent, nature, and application, of the revenues of the Church."

It is no longer denied by those who are at all

* Lord Henley on Reform.

acquainted with the omnipotent authority of both houses of Parliament, and have traced the history of its proceedings in former ages, that they have an undoubted control over Church property, and are bound as its trustees and guardians to prevent its appropriation to any other purposes than those for which it was originally designed. The present able and learned Bishop of Lincoln, who, from his correct knowledge of civil and ecclesiastical law, is competent to give a sound judgment upon the subject, thus speaks: 'the property of the Church was originally conferred by those who had a right to confer it: but with a condition annexed to the gift—the condition of communicating religious instruction to the people. The State is the trustee charged with the office of taking care, on the one hand, that the property is preserved inviolate and entire; and on the other, that the condition on which it was given, is punctually fulfilled.' This declaration has been followed by the avowal of the Bishop of London, 'that the parochial revenues might be collected in a manner less obnoxious to the country, and distributed in a manner more to the honour of the Church.' Opinions so well-founded, and emanating from so high a quarter, will doubtless produce a powerful impression on the minds both of the clergy and laity. It is therefore, highly incumbent on the ministers of our venerable establishment to take especial care by the utmost fidelity in the discharge of their holy functions, that they may be able to give a conscientious account of their application of those

talents which the charitable munificence of our ancestors have committed to their hands.

If, then, on a due investigation of the revenues of the Church, undertaken in a proper spirit, and with a sincere desire of arriving simply at the truth, some portion of error and abuse, be detected, it will be her wisest policy, as it is her bounden duty, to lose not a single moment in putting away all the evils and corruptions,' which have been so long, and so loudly complained of. Let us proceed immediately to the salutary work of thoroughly cleansing and purifying the augean stable, however arduous or unpalatable may be the task imposed on us. A superficial, slight, and palliative expedient, will neither satisfy the zeal and love of her friends, nor disarm the rancour of her enemies. The nation demands a sound, an honest, and above all, a Religious Reformation of every tangible and palpable abuse. A reformation, springing from a deep conviction of the extent and sinfulness of the corruptions which prevail, and conducted with high and holy aspirations after christian purity and excellence. A reformation adopted in obedience to God's word and will, and conducted in subordination to that heavenly standard.

It is highly gratifying to observe, that the foregoing remarks made nine years ago, have not been lost on the dignitaries of the Church, or on the legislative assemblies of the nation, who have evinced a desire to effect those ameliorations in the management of Church property, so urgently

recommended by their pious and judicious author. In pursuance of the plan which he has suggested for the correction of those evils, which he so feelingly deplored, an ecclesiastical commission has been appointed to devise a better mode of making the property of the Church more available for the purposes for which it was demised. This Commission has commenced its operations by advising the suppression of some of the prebends and sinecure livings, and applying their proceeds to the augmentation of poor benefices, so as to raise them to the amount of £150. per annum. Ninety one rectories, vicarages, and perpetual curacies have been thus augmented by grants made to them on the first day of November, 1841. The same measure is to be 'extended to other classes of benefices, when the fund applicable thereto shall have sufficiently increased.' This is a proceeding which, independent of the comfort it will vouchsafe to the respective incumbents, will gladden the hearts of the real friends of the establishment, by manifesting a desire on the part of the guardians of its interests, to carry out those reforms so essentially necessary to its existence and well-being. We really hope that this initiative step will be followed by others of a similar nature to be pointed out hereafter, until all the benefices of the smallest classes shall be, as soon as possible, raised to the annual value of £300 or £350 per annum, if an equitable distribution of Church property can be made available to advance them to the latter sum.

We are glad to learn that bishops are appointed for New Zealand and Jerusalem, and that episcopal sees are soon likely to be erected in the Colonies of New Brunswick, the Cape of Good Hope, Van Dieman's Land, and Ceylon. These measures, whilst they argue the zeal of the Church of England, and prove that she is awakening to a sense of her responsibility, to attempt the conversion of the world, will be replete with great blessedness to millions, who will thus be taught how to inherit everlasting life. Such attempts will do much to dignify the British establishment in the eyes of the whole world, and to draw forth the admiration of her friends. Should she prosecute this noble enterprise in a becoming spirit, (as she assuredly will,) with all the resources at her disposal, she will not only cover herself with honour, but her "works of faith and labours of love" will call forth the plaudits of the Head of the Church militant and triumphant, who will say at last, in commendation of her pious services, "Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Let her then pursue her charitable and godlike course with unwearied activity, acting agreeably to the maxim, 'that we should consider nothing done, whilst any thing remains to be accomplished.'

'His Majesty King William was pleased to issue a commission under the great seal, dated the 23rd day of June, in the second year of his reign, authorizing the commissioners therein named, to make a full and correct enquiry respecting the

The total amount of the gross annual revenues of the several cathedral and collegiate Churches in England and Wales is £284,241, and the total amount of the net annual revenues of the same is £208,289.

The total amount of the gross annual separate revenues of the several dignitaries, and other spiritual persons, members of the cathedral and collegiate churches in England and Wales is £75,854: and the total amount of the net annual separate revenues of the same is £66,465.*

There are however in England and Wales properly speaking about 12,600 benefices instead of 10,718. 'The error of such a statement arises from two causes. In the first place it is computed from the data given in Bacon's 'Liber Regis,' and from the episcopal returns of a later date, both of which are extremely defective; and in the second place, they reckon as single benefices any number that have been from necessity consolidated into one incumbency. The avowed reason for such annexations originally was, that separately, the benefices were not able to maintain a minister; and therefore, to secure the joint advantage of clerical service, they were consolidated.' The clergyman who holds four livings which are able to support four ministers, is just as obnoxious a pluralist, if they are consolidated, as if they were separate benefices

The reason which has hitherto existed for the

* Report of the Commissioners appointed by his Majesty to inquire into the Ecclesiastical revenues for England and Wales.

therefore, one-third from £5,600,000, there remains to the parochial clergy, £3,730,000. To this sum add £115,000 per annum from the augmentation lands &c., procured by Queen Anne's Bounty, and the result is £3,845,000; which alone would provide the 12,600 cures with an income of more than £300. per annum each. But there are other extensive sources of revenue besides the above. Of the 5,000,000 acres of cultivated land, exempt from tithes in 1800, part was exempt by commutation, and paid an equivalent for the tithes in another shape. Another considerable part is exempt by payment of a modus. To these items we must add the payments made by impropriators to vicars, and the annual value of the glebes and parsonages, and the receipts from surplice fees. The amount arising from the fees, glebes, &c. has been estimated by Dr. Cove, at more than £400,000. The whole cannot probably amount to less than £4,500,000; which would provide each of the 12,600 benefices, with more than £350 per annum; and as these are consolidated into 10,000 benefices in their present state, would endow every present incumbency with no less than £450 per annum."

is reposed than the charge of the present happiness and eternal welfare of immortal souls. If the excellence and merits of a proxy are not admitted in earthly trusts, to justify the absence and neglect of the principal, are they to be thought more allowable in heavenly, where the vast concerns of eternity are at stake? Pluralism therefore is a scandalous anomaly—a violation of common justice, and is nothing less than a corrupt perversion of sacred property from the avowed object, for which it was given, which the legislature ought not to permit, nor the Church wish to continue any longer.

The conscientious Bishop Burnet, in his valedictory address to his clergy and country, uses the following indignant remonstrance on this subject. 'I do not enter into the scandalous practices of non-residence and pluralities, which are sheltered by so many colours of law among us: whereas the Church of Rome, from which we had those and many other abuses, has freed herself from this,* under which we labour, to our great and just reproach. How long, how long shall this be the

* In the Council of Trent, a few years after the Reformation, it was resolved, that only one benefice should be held by one Priest, even if that Priest were a Cardinal. The example of the Pope in this respect is worthy of imitation by the English Church, and should be followed as quickly as possible, if we desire to exalt it in the estimation of its best friends.—'Quoniam multi ea quæ bene constituta sunt, variis artibus eludere, et plura simul beneficia obtinere non erubescunt, sancta synodus presenti decreto, quod in quibuscunque personis, quocumque titulo, etiam si cardinalatus honore fulgeant, mandat, observari statuit, ut in posterum unum tantum beneficium ecclesiasticum conferatur.' Chap. 17, of the Decree of Reformation, of the 24th Session of the Council of Trent.

for the reparation of the Church, and the remaining half was equally assigned for the support of the working clergy, and the relief of the poor and necessitous. The oblations thus received were thrown into a common fund, and the whole was distributed by the Bishops in shares to the officiating clergy. Pluralism such as prevails now in the Church, had no existence then, when a suitable provision was thus afforded to its ministers.*

"But as kings founded cathedrals for their dominions, in process of time men of large landed estates began to found churches for their domains, and to provide by grant for the maintenance of resident ministers to serve them. As conversion to Christianity became prevalent, the erection and endowment of churches became general; and these churches being erected upon, and endowed from particular manors, gave to manors the title and character of parishes—the word parish signifying the precinct of a church. As manors again, which originally were very extensive, were gradually subdivided, churches were raised upon the severed estates by the new proprietors; and thus parishes were subdivided also, and the number of the parochial clergy increased. The consecration of every church was left to the discretion of the diocesan—the appointment of the minister to his nomination, and the parochial income to his disposal. The whole church revenues were still accumulated and distributed in the usual way."

* Milner's Eccl. History, Vol. III. 77—93. See Bede, Cent. VI.

Indeed up to the conquest of William, there is no complaint of, or allusion to pluralism, in our church history; and that is a sufficient proof that at that period it was unknown.

It should be noticed that hitherto the church patronage was vested chiefly in the lay lords, and that in their hands it was honestly and usefully dispensed. We shall now see it rapidly transferred to religious bodies, and as rapidly perverted to improper purposes. The popular feeling for the advancement of religion, which during the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries, had exhibited itself so strongly in the endowment of parish churches, was diverted by the Norman swarm, to an object ostensibly the same in kind, but much more comprehensive and lucrative in degree—the endowment of collegiate bodies, in the shape of chapters and monasteries, &c. (A. D. 1066.) Within one hundred and fifty years after the conquest, that is, before the reign of Henry IIIrd, when the Mortmain Act, and the introduction of mendicant friars, were resorted to as a check to their increase and influence, no less than four hundred and seventy six abbies and priories, eighty-one alien priories, and one hundred and fifty-five houses and cells were established. The collegiate bodies soon contrived to obtain the patronage of the lay lords, who with a simplicity which speaks much for their zeal in behalf of religion, readily assented to a proposal for transferring their patronage to institutions as they thought better qualified than themselves for its exercise. 'The lay patrons,' says

Burn, 'remembering that the clergy, living in common with the Bishop in his cathedral church, were formerly maintained by the tithes and oblations of the country; when this practice ceased, they thought it a laudable restitution to give the perpetual advowson of their churches to that body. All the monasteries found this method to be a very good expedient for them. Hence they incited their benefactors to confer upon their houses the right of presentation to country churches—a favour the more easily obtained, because the lay lords looked upon themselves as guardians only, and were glad to devolve their trust upon those societies, who, as they thought, would faithfully discharge it.'

'And what was the consequence of all this? Why, that these societies divided the patronage amongst themselves, and became pluralists, precisely in the same fashion as the deans and prebendaries of the present day. Like them, also, they placed curates on their benefices, to perform the clerical duties attached to them, at the lowest marketable rate that offered; and devoted the ample residue of the revenues entrusted to them to the indulgence of their own splendid idleness, or the gratification of their own grasping avarice. The few remaining lay patrons, of course, followed the example, as they were reasonably justified in doing; and thus, in the course of a century, the portion of the church wealth allotted to the working clergy, was reduced to a miserable pittance of it, as it is now.' The plea for indulging this monopolizing of benefices, in former times, was

who was markedly abstinent in enforcing his claims on those congregations amongst whom he distributed the bread of eternal life, declares, that he was entitled, (and by parity of reason all conscientious pastors who tread in his steps) to a suitable provision in return for those spiritual benefits he imparted to them, "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." * "We have already seen how religious bodies contrived to get the greater part of the Church patronage into their hands, and what use they made of it. Still the tenure by which they held it was not the most manageable or certain; and their policy was to improve it as much as possible. They held it only in trust, and their responsibility was sometimes remembered to their disadvantage. The monks first hit upon the right plan. They procured an indulgence from the Pope, that whatever Churches they held in advowson, they should provide properly with clerks; and having done this, should have the rest of the profits in proprios usus, and at their unfettered disposal. They had driven the nail up to the head before, and this act was clenching it with a vengeance. They had now such a firm hold of as much of the Church revenues as they could lay their hands upon, so that the pos-

* 1 Cor. ix. 9—14.

session of them became a very parcel of papal supremacy. The only instance in which they relaxed their grasp, was in submitting very ungraciously to substitute endowed and perpetual vicarages, for stipendiary and dependent curacies, upon what had now become appropriated benefices—the amount of endowment being left to the diocesan.'

Nor were the cathedral bodies of those times a whit more conscientious than the monastics. 'The secular clergy (so called, because they lived in seculo, abroad and with the world, which distinguished them from the monastics) says our ecclesiastical jurist, soon learned this way of gain from the monks, and thought it as lawful and proper for any of the collegiate bodies, as it was for the regular convents. And, therefore, they likewise got the Churches in their own donation to be converted to their own proper uses; and persuaded the neighbouring patrons to come and offer up advowsons on their high altar to increase the number of their prebends or to augment the portion of the dean, or of any other principal dignitary.' This practice, in a very short time became the custom of the land; and so rapid was the infection of it, that, before the reign of Edward the Third, two-fifths of the benefices, and those not of the poorest, but the richest in England, were appropriated by these corporate monopolists.'—Thus the matter stood in the fourteenth century, and continued to stand until the reformation of the Church from popery. The monasteries were then

dissolved by Henry the Eighth, and their appropriations transferred to the crown. The cathedral appropriations remain untouched, which ought, in common justice, as well as the property of the religious houses, to have been re-appropriated to its primary use for the benefit of the parochial clergy. 'Of those that had been taken from the monasteries, a part were distributed amongst the influential laymen about the court; another part were devoted to the endowment of new Bishoprics; a third part were exchanged by the crown in the time of Elizabeth for lands and manors in the possession of cathedral bodies, and those that remained to the crown were returned to the Church by Charles the First.' We thus see how the Church property was disposed of by successive monarchs.

Our learned Diocesan, the Bishop of Lincoln, makes the following remarks on this transaction, with which we fully agree. 'When the religious houses were dissolved, an opportunity offered itself of remedying the evils of appropriation, and restoring to the parochial ministers the revenues which had, to the great injury of the cause of religion, been diverted to other purposes. It may be alleged that the possessions of the Church bore too large a proportion to the whole property of the country, (about one-fourth) and that a formidable obstacle was thereby thrown in the way of its growing prosperity. Yet if it was desirable to withdraw a part, the alienation of the landed estates of the religious houses might surely have been

in Churchmen, and by which the people were neglected, the sacerdotal function lost, and the holy revenues (of the Church) mispent in luxury and pride.'

which separately considered, is quite sufficient to occupy the undivided attention of a resident incumbent, provided there were (as in time there no doubt will be) parsonage-houses attached to them all. But the number of clergymen which engross the whole of these benefices, is only about 7,760. There must, therefore, be a very considerable number of benefices, upon which the incumbents do not reside, and, therefore, either bestow only a small share of their attention upon them, or in some cases none at all. The number of non-resident clergymen indeed, is much greater than any one, (unless the returns verified it) could believe. In 1809, it appeared, that out of 11,194 benefices, from which returns were obtained, there were no less than 7,358 cases of non-residence, a proportion of two thirds." In 1832, Lord Henley thus writes: "It appears from the last Parliamentary returns, that out of 10,533 livings in England and Wales, there are only 4,413 residents: more than 4000 livings are insufficient to maintain a minister: —more than 4,800 have no fit residence upon them."

This is an appalling consideration, a grievous evil, which demands the application of a suitable remedy, as speedily as possible. Let the property of the Church, (with a due regard to vested rights) be more equitably distributed, and ample means will soon be discovered to correct an abuse, which must vitally impair her usefulness and respectability, as long as it is suffered to continue. If the aforementioned 7,760 incumbents are divided into three classes, the first holding a single bene-

"Let the register of benefices be consulted, and it will furnish the following table of reference for pluralists:—

ENGLAND AND WALES.

	Incumbents.	Livings.
The first order of Clergymen holding one Benefice, amounts to	4,440	4,440
The second order of Incumbents, or Pluralists, holding two Benefices each, amounts to . .	2,560	5,120
The third order of Pluralists holding more than two Benefices each, amounts to . . .	760	3,040
Total	7,760	12,600

"We thus ascertain, that out of 12,600 benefices, 8,160 are held by pluralists; that is a little less than two-thirds. The number moreover of such pluralists, it will be observed, is 3,320; and supposing them to do the duty of one benefice on the average, the duty of 4,840 benefices out of the 8,160 which they hold, must be performed by curates."

It cannot be seriously believed that it is indispensably necessary for the respectability, much less for the utility, of the Church, that less than three-tenths of the clergy should thus hold six and a half-tenths of the Church property; when thereby an equal number are excluded from it altogether. No mode of reasoning, which the abettors of the system may choose to adopt, can make us think it necessary for the welfare of the establishment, that a fourth part of the parochial revenues should be bestowed upon a sixteenth part of the ministry; as in the case of the largest class of pluralists,

when more than five times their number are kept thereby in a state of poverty and dependence; which is as injurious to the interests of the Church, as it is unjust to that valuable order of clergymen, who suffer so many privations from such a violation of their rights.

Besides, the mischievous effects to religion produced by this unequal division of the bread of the Church, what a painful contrast does it exhibit in the circumstances of the clergy themselves! In the case of the favoured few, there is a useless and wasteful profusion, which is calculated to engender pride, idleness, and secularity, which led to the destruction of Sodom;* and must, if continued, act as a fatal gangrene to destroy the vitality of the Church: but what a marked difference is observable in the case of a very large class of beneficed incumbents with livings too poor to admit of a decent maintenance, and several thousand curates, with so scanty an income, as not only to compel them to resort to little acts of domestic parsimony, which it is impossible for them always to conceal from the eye of inquisitive curiosity, but also to withdraw their hands from the exercise of that charity, towards the poor and necessitous, to which both their office and their inclination peculiarly invite them. This is an anomalous display of riches, and comparative poverty, which was not sanctioned by the founder of the christian religion,† not approved of in the

* Ezekiel xvi. 49.

† Matt. x. 10.

apostolic and primitive ages of the Church, * nor tolerated by those pious and munificent laymen, who built temples for the worship of the living God, and endowed them for the express purpose of making competent provision for the parochial clergy; in order that they might devote the whole of their time and energies to feed the flocks which God had committed to their charge. Does this unhallowed spirit of monopoly in the few, argue their zeal for the divine glory in the extension of Christ's spiritual kingdom amongst mankind, or the shameful lack and deficiency of it? Does it proclaim the possession of that heaven-born "charity which seeketh not her own" exclusively; or rather that sordid disposition, which "supposeth that gain is godliness?"† which has caused those in every age, who have indulged it, "to fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition?"‡

Is it not to be feared that such pluralists, as accumulate benefices upon themselves, by worldly influence, too closely imitate the example of Simon Magus, and without deep repentance for their sacrilegious robbery, will share at last in the punishment of that self-deceived sorcerer?§

The friends of the abolition of pluralism will perhaps be told by the advocates of the system, for it is an argument which is frequently, though uselessly urged by them, for its continuance; that

* Acts iv. 32. † 1 Tim. vi. 5. ‡ Ibid. vi. 9, 10.
§ Acts viii. 9—24.

a number of livings are so small, that unless an incumbent were to hold three or four of them, he would not have sufficient for a maintenance. We might revert to the question in reply, if one person cannot exist without three or four benefices to support his family dignity, how are others, whose necessities are just as great, and whose labours are equally, if not more, beneficial to the Church and the world, to exist upon one, and in the case of unbeneficed clergymen, on a small portion of that single living? Are we to estimate the respectability, importance, and usefulness of an ecclesiastic, by the amount of his preferment, or by the more scriptural rule of his self-denial, disinterested labours, and piety?

But what is the matter of fact with regard to the poor livings of the establishment? By what class of persons are they generally held? Principally speaking it is not the smaller, but the larger benefices, that are held three or four together by pluralists. The reader may soon be convinced of this truth by consulting the Report of the ecclesiastical commissioners made to King William in the year 1835, which gives a correct list of their preferments. Although the law of Henry the Eighth prohibits the holding (with exceptions in favour of dignitaries,) of more than one living of a certain value, 'yet, in practice, there are so many colourable pretexts,' says the learned prelate, Bishop Burnet, 'of evading that salutary enactment, that there is no effectual bar against the engrossing of benefices, either in amount or

number; and we see but a very weak one in the modesty of the competitors.' It results, therefore, almost as a necessary consequence, that as the same influence which can command the best, can also command the most, it is most frequently the best, and not the worst incumbencies, that will be found accumulated in the hands of individuals. The truth is, that those livings which the pluralists strive to obtain, are those which are deemed the best for that purpose, and are said to be 'worth having.' This discovery renders pluralism more unjustifiable and abominable. 'Of course it is all very well to affect a tender consideration for those who hold impoverished benefices; but in reality, the poverty of some churches, has too often been speciously urged as a false reason for protecting the monopoly of those that are best endowed.' Pluralism, then, it seems, is a sort of canonical offence, necessary in the judgment of some, who wish to make God's house a sinecure, in order to support an affected dignity, which really debases it.

What then? I can easily imagine an opulent pluralist to exclaim, Would you equalize the incomes of the clergy, and put them upon a common footing? I certainly would raise in the first place every poor benefice to the annual value of from 3 to £400 per annum, and none should exceed £500; and then enfore residence, except in case of sickness or mental incapacity; and restrain every clergyman, whatever might be his family pretensions, from occupying more than one such living, under any circumstances in which he

might be placed. This plan would cut off all occasion of trafficking in sacred things, ensure the benefit of constant pastoral instruction, and elevate the character of the Church, by bringing its ministry to bear more efficiently on every parish in the kingdom. Such a method would carry out effectually the original intention of the founders of our national Church, who never designed it to become the medium of enriching some, to the detriment of others, by pandering to their avarice, pride, and luxury. Until such a scheme is adopted, no sophistical arguments, that can be advanced in favour of pluralism, can shield the Church of England from the obloquy of its enemies, or secure for it the unqualified homage of its devoted friends.

The following table exhibiting the slender provision of several thousand rectories and vicarages in England and Wales, imperiously calls for the adoption of the measure.

The scale of benefices returned to the archbishops and Bishops on the 10th day of June 1834, shows the direct poverty of 4,000 livings, in contrast with the rich endowment of the remainder. We will divide them into two classes.

In the First Class there are

1[illegible]	Benefices from £[illegible] to £50. per annum.	
882	of £50. and under	£100.
587	100	150.
1365	150	200.
1864	200	300.

882 Benefices, varying from £[illegible] to £50. £100. to £200. and upwards per annum.

In the Second Class there are

1317	Livings of	£300.	and under	£400.
830	...	400.	...	500.
504	...	500.	...	600.
337	...	600.	...	700.
247	...	700.	...	800.
129	...	800.	...	900.
91	...	900.	...	1000.
137	...	1000.	...	1500.
31	...	1500.	...	2000.
18	...	2000. and reaching from 3000. to 4000.		

It is important to ascertain by what means nearly 4000 benefices have become so impoverished. "It is easily explained by the fact, that there are 3845 impropriated benefices;" the great bulk of whose incomes is received and enjoyed, by laymen. The cause of their deterioration is at once obvious; and being known, suggests how, with such a number of livings reduced by it, the parochial revenues are still so large, by reason of the greater number which are exempted from impropriation. 'Admitting then that there are 4000 incumbencies reduced by this measure and other causes, to £80 a year each, or to a total revenue of about £320,000; there will then remain under the present system of consolidation, upwards of 6000 untouched, producing a revenue of about £4,200,000, or £700 a year on the average. 'Nor is this a mere numerical calculation; it is equally an unavoidable deduction from facts. The average number of acres in a parish is well known to be 3,500, the tithes of which if taken at 4s. per acre, or commuted for one-sixth of the land at 24s. per acre, produce an average income of £700. per annum.

I rejoice to observe that the ecclesiastical commissioners have begun to turn their attention to the augmentation of a small portion, about ninety of these impoverished benefices, to the amount of £150 per annum. 'By the suspension of certain canonries and prebends in cathedral and collegiate churches, in pursuance of an Act passed in the third and fourth years of her Majesty's reign, the commissioners are enabled to accomplish that desirable object: and with the funds accruing from this source, they propose the augmentation of other benefices of that class, as soon as it can be conveniently effected. This appropriation, as far as it extends, is a promising amelioration; but, it is too limited in its operation, to meet the exigencies of the case. Other methods of a more vigorous, prompt, and decided character, must be resorted to as opportunities present themselves, for the removal of a grievous incubus on the Church, which seriously affects its vitality. These will be pointed out in one of the succeeding chapters.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE CATHEDRAL CLERGY—THEIR NUMBER—THE REVENUES POSSESSED BY THEM—THEIR NATURE AND AMOUNT—THE EXTENSIVE ALTERATIONS NECESSARY TO ADAPT CATHEDRAL WORSHIP TO THE GLORY OF GOD, AND THE PUBLIC EDIFICATION.

After a long night of Pagan darkness and superstition, and persecution commencing from the erection of the Christian Church, and terminating with the life of Dioclesian, the Roman emperor; Constantine by the providence of God assumed the reins of government, and was so favourably disposed towards Christianity, that he zealously patronized the pastors of the Church all his days; founded cathedrals and churches for divine worship; endowed them with liberal grants of land for their support, and employed himself continually, in propogating the knowledge of Christ throughout his vast dominions. In succeeding ages, when kings and governors and nobles were converted to the Christian faith, they testified their gratitude for the spiritual benefits derived therefrom, by settling great and large demesne lands, on those who converted them; and the first oratories or places of public worship, built on those estates, were called cathedra sedes—cathedrals or seats; from the clergy's constant residence on them. Thus King Ethelbert about the year 597, began to erect the cathedrals of Canterbury, York, Rochester, and London; and endowed them with ample revenues which were left to the disposal of their respective

To this number must be added, fourteen Clerical persons, entitled Treasurers and Lecturers, making a net Total of 817.

The quantum of service performed by this clerical order is more easily ascertained, than the amount of their incomes, which from the apparent mystery in which it is enveloped, can be much better conceived than described. The bishops have at times sundry, important, and laborious duties to perform. The archdeacons, who are valuable auxiliaries to our venerable prelates, are by the canon law styled the 'bishop's eye;' chiefly because they exercise their jurisdiction throughout the diocese at the pleasure of the bishop, as his vicar universally, to make inquiry and inspection into ecclesiastical affairs, and to supply his place on emergent occasions.*

The rest of the body in their cathedral capacity, discharge the customary duties of the cathedral churches, and nothing more; except where they render their occasional services to some one of the churches, to which they have been preferred. Their cathedral offices are in a great degree sinecures to the majority of this select order of clergymen. There is usually a sermon delivered on Sunday mornings in the cathedral by one of the dignitaries or vicars; and prayers are read twice every day in the week by the vicars alternately, attended by the canon residentiaries.

The civil business of the dioceses is transacted by diocesan chancellors, registrars, and others not

* Burn's Ecclesiastical Law.

and some dozens without it, who come to hear the voluntary and the anthem, and then irreverently retire, as if the only object of their attendance was answered, by the gratification of the ear, without any reference to the improvement of the heart and life.

The gross annual value of the Archbishop's and Bishop's revenues, is £181,631. The gross amount of the revenues of the dignitaries of Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, and other spiritual persons, members of the same, is stated to be in the ecclesiastical report £360,000. Of this large fund, the Bishops receive about one-third; and the other two-thirds are divided amongst the Deans and Chapters, who are possessed of the largest share of the gross Cathedral revenues, the several members of which are individually in the receipt of considerable incomes, in various proportions; the highest of all being about £8000. per annum. The remaining dignitaries have generally but little connexion with the chapter or capitular bodies, but manage the peculiar concerns of their respective dignities, as sole corporations, and are variously benefited by their much inferior incomes.* This is a revenue considerably exceeding one-sixth of the estimated income of all the Parochial Clergy of England and Wales; and it becomes material, in prosecution of our investigation, to inquire what the services are, in return for which so large an amount of income is paid. These services will be found to be fully comprised

* Dr. Cove on Church Property.

in the following catalogue: a stated number of days and nights passed in residence at the Bishop's see; a certain number of attendances at morning and evening service on week days, and in some cathedrals, a few sermons, on Sundays and festivals. The period of residence is adjusted in a most capricious and mischievous mode. In some chapters the requisite residence is three months, in others two, and often only one. In some, it should appear, that even this is not required. The late Earl of Bridgewater drew the magnificent income of one of the golden stalls of Durham, while living at Paris. And in another chapter it is possible for a person never even to have seen the inside of a cathedral, since the day he read himself in, and to have been in the receipt of an income equal to eight or ten small livings, for upwards of a quarter of a century, without performing any one duty in office whatever. Many of these individuals are, unquestionably, valuable and diligent labourers, who, in other places, and in other modes, have rendered, or are rendering, good service to the Church. But here they have no sphere or means of usefulness. They are connected with no poor who look up to them as their protectors and guides: they have no sick and dying to pray with: no children to catechise: no flock towards whom the sympathies and affections of a pastor can be called forth. The most important offering to God's glory and service, is a formal attendance on a cold and pompous ceremonial.*

* Lord Henley's Pamphlet, p. 23—25.

The cathedral clergy, in addition to their dignities and offices, are parochial pluralists, and they are the most offensive class of that kind, not only from the number, but from the actual value of their benefices. They monopolize nearly all the best livings in the country; and the favoured third of them—those, who are possessed, says Dr. Cove, of the largest share of the cathedral revenues, hold more than three of the best livings each, on an average. These dignitaries very seldom serve, or (except for the purpose of reading in) even see the rich and numerous livings to which they are inducted!

In addition to their vast wealth arising from land, and fines on the renewal of leases, the cathedral clergy are endowed with the patronage of 2190 benefices—one-fifth of the parochial churches, which are drained to increase their opulence, and aggravate the poverty of the parochial clergy. But this is not all! The 2190 benefices are nominally distributed amongst the whole body of the cathedral clergy, but at least four-fifths of the real profits thereof, are engrossed by the two hundred and twenty-seven—'the capitular bodies,' by those who are confessed by Dr. Cove to hold the largest share of the gross cathedral revenues.

All benefices originally were rectories, the proceeds of which whether arising from law or endowment, were under the exclusive control of the incumbents, for their own maintenance. The first invasion of this property was in the patron being allowed to impropriate the profits of the benefice,

this patronage was obtained, and to what purposes it is applied, even to the enriching of 227 dignitaries, we cannot feel astonished at the sentence pronounced against it by the public, who loudly demand the correction of so palpable an evil. The legislature who at the time culpably sanctioned the misappropriation of these revenues, cannot revoke the act; but their present successors may justly cause them to revert to their original destination, by using them for the augmentation of parochial livings; and the sooner this work of justice is done, with due respect to the retention of them, during the lives of their present occupants, the more effective will the establishment she made to answer the important ends for which it was instituted—the spiritual instruction of the whole kingdom.

Some alterations, I humbly conceive, may be suggested for rendering the celebration of cathedral service more consonant with the usages of the primitive Church of Christ, more edifying to the congregations which assemble in those splendid temples, and more satisfactory to the public taste. To secure this important object, it will be found expedient to confide the superintendance and management of their whole service to the Bishop exclusively, and the resident Archdeacon as his substitute, assisted by three vicars, alternately sharing the duties among themselves. There should be two full services every Sunday, besides the weekly prayers. A sermon delivered successively on each Sabbath day by the Bishop or

Archdeacon would command the devout attention of an admiring audience, who would gladly receive and profit by the "word of exhortation" from such a source. The prayers should be read with suitable devotion, emphasis, and distinctness, that they may be, as they are designed, an appropriate preparation for the discourse, by solemnizing the minds of the attendants. Every thing that approaches to art and affectation, whether in reading our incomparable Liturgy, or the portions of sacred writ appointed for the day, ought to be studiously banished from the cathedral; and Christian simplicity should run through the whole service. Instead of miserably chanting the Psalms, which is an absurd caricature of Psalmody, that should not be suffered to debase the service of Almighty God, let them be soberly and plainly read, that they may be understood by the people. A selection of Psalms and Hymns adapted to special occasions, and to illustrate the text of scripture chosen for the sermon, may prove of great benefit in aiding the devotions of the congregation. "One of the first and most desirable of those reforms, which are necessary in conducting cathedral service, is in the present system of Church music; in taking away such relics of Popery as chanting, and all anthems, solos, duets, voluntaries, &c. and endeavouring to make our Psalmody simple, easy, and above all, universal and congregational, a practice to be adopted and encouraged wherever, in the beautiful language of Mr. Montgomery, 'there is a church on earth, training up candidates for the church in heaven.' *

The choirs of our cathedrals which are very small in proportion to the whole body of those magnificent buildings, might be advantageously extended to accommodate, under this improved system of worship, the increased number that would most probably resort to them. Were such rational reforms in the service carried into execution, how many would exclaim, chastened by the alluring sound of the gospel, and the scriptural beauty of the service, and the solemn associations created by the place, "how dreadful is this place? this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."† The Bishops permanently residing in their episcopal sees, would be armed with full authority to effect such alterations for the promotion of true religion, which instead of the coldness and formality now pervading the cathedral service, would allure many who desire "to worship God in spirit and in truth," to join with their dignified pastors, in offering holy oblations of praise and thanksgiving.

Suitable arrangements having been made for the due performance of divine worship, the next great desideratum will be to abolish every office in the cathedral which approaches to a sinecure, that can be dispensed with. But, in every alteration of this kind, the preservation of the perfect inviolability of all life interests should be scrupulously adhered to. Nothing of this kind, however objec-

* Lord Henley's Pamphlet, p. 35. † Gen. xxviii. 17.

tionable in principle, or practice, must be interfered with to the injury of the present occupants. Their offices consistent with national faith and honour, should only terminate on the demise, or voluntary resignation of those, who are now legally invested with them. This provision is as just, as it is expedient.

As Deans and their chapters, consisting of canons and prebendaries, are not recognized in the word of God, and perform no spiritual services indispensably necessary to the benefit of the Church or community; and as these officers were appointed in the monastic ages principally for secular purposes, no valid argument can be deduced from scripture for their continuance, in a Church which desires to reform itself effectually on christian principles. "Archbishop Cranmer called prebendaries an estate and order of ecclesiastics, which St. Paul, reckoning the degrees and ranks of christian officers in his time, could not find in his day in the Church of Christ." He entertained serious doubts as to the utility of such dignitaries. In answer to a proposal made by Cromwell, in 1539, for founding a church with a provost, twelve prebendaries, &c. at Canterbury, Bishop Burnet gives the following account of his objections. "He says prebendaries were generally idle, and only good vianders, but neither learned, nor given to teach; that they looked to be chief and bear rule, and by their ill-example they corrupted the youth. When men were advanced to that post they (generally) desisted from their studies, and from the

exercise of preaching and teaching; therefore he wished their name might be struck out of the King's foundations; their first beginning was good, but they had left their just estate, and so it is fit they should perish together." As comparatively useless supernumeraries, in a church already provided with sufficient ministers, to effect her sacred objects, or as sinecurists in cities, where they have no efficient duties to perform, they should be totally abolished, and their preferments vested in the hands of an ecclesiastical commission, for improving the temporal condition, and respectability of the working clergy.

All the dignitaries necessary for the beneficial supervision and performance of the ecclesiastical duties of cathedrals, and the dioceses in which they reside, are the bishops and archdeacons, assisted by their vicars; and for the management of the civil business of their sees, their chancellors, registrars, &c. are fully adequate.

There are usually two arguments adduced in support of the vicious system of pluralism. First, "it is said, that it is necessary to have sinecures as a temptation to men of family to enter the Church, by which means religion is brought home to the higher classes, and the Church obtains a support and an acknowledgment which is of great benefit to the cause of religion. Now this object which has been somewhat overrated, will neither be effectually nor creditably attained by the institution of sinecures. If the object of a candidate for holy orders be to vegetate upon a sinecure,

ently honourable recompense for the most distinguished talents. And now to bring this painful subject to a speedy conclusion, should any pluralist feel compunctious visitings of conscience for the abuse of the sacred trust committed to his charge, let him make a prompt atonement to God, and the Church and the nation, by disencumbering himself of the load of his preferments, and residing in future, on a single benefice, "doing the work of an evangelist, and making full proof of his ministry;"* for, unless I am egregiously mistaken, it is infinitely preferable, with eternity in full view, to be faithful in an inferior station, than to be uselessly cumbered with the honours and splendours of the Church militant, with a certain prospect of being excluded from a seat of true dignity in the Church triumphant; where many who are now "last," in the estimation of misjudging mortals, will hereafter be "first" in the affectionate esteem of their divine Master, and many who are "first" amongst fallible worldly men, will then be "last," and dismissed with everlasting shame from his presence, as unjust and faithless stewards.†

* 2 Tim. iv. 5.

† Matthew xix. 30.

ing only to confined districts in their immediate neighbourhoods. The extent of the diocese was called παροιχια. About the third century dioceses were greatly enlarged. That of Rome had above forty churches in it, and forty-six priests, under the direction of Cornelius, its bishop. The vast extension of them proved very inconvenient to the cause of godliness.* Archbishop Cranmer wished to correct this evil in our national Church, and he wanted neither zeal nor judgment for the undertaking. But that and many other good things slept with the English Reformers. Several of our dioceses in this kingdom are inconveniently large, comprising three and four counties, the effectual superintendence and inspection of which, is too arduous a task for one individual to perform. Every parish in a diocese should be brought under the vigilant eye of the bishop; in order, that he might be accurately acquainted with the doctrine and life of its pastor; check the progress of error, and see that all things are "done decently and in order." This, however, cannot be accomplished, whilst our dioceses are so extensive, and hence the reduction of them would add greatly to the benefit of the Church and the nation, by laying a better foundation for peace, harmony, and unanimity of sentiment.

It is proposed, therefore, that the authority of Parliament should be interposed, to effect so desirable a change. The dioceses in which the

* Milner's Ecclesiastical History. Vol. I. p. 548, 549.

sary is it now, on account of the vast increase in our population, which has multiplied since then perhaps more than sevenfold.

Such an appointment would insure the annual visitation of the whole diocese, open greater facilities for intercourse with the bishops and their clergy, afford personal opportunities for censuring and admonishing the unfaithful, the negligent, and the immoral, and for encouraging, by the parental kindness of their superiors, those pious and zealous labourers in Christ's vineyard, "who study to show themselves approved unto God, as workmen that need not be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth."* Moreover, it would infuse vigour and activity into the ministers of Christ, and oppose a shield to preserve the people of our charge from being corrupted and seduced by the specious, though destructive errors of Popery and irreligion. And would not these immense advantages be of sufficient importance to counterbalance any supposed inconveniences that might be anticipated from the adoption of the system?

2. In fixing the amount of the stipends of the prelates, the country should, to use the words of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, secure to the Church 'a government apostolical, with dignities neither splendid nor sordid, too great for contempt, and too little for envy, unless she meet with little people, and greatly malicious.'

Agreeably to this suggestion, the maximum of

* 1 Tim. ii. 15.

nation and the Church, should have their latter days made comfortable at the expense of the state.

There will be two classes of objectors to this fixed provision for our venerable prelates; those who will consider it too large, and those who will think it much too small. The former must be reminded of the necessary expenses incurred for hospitality to the clergy, and most of all for charitable contributions for the erection of churches and schools, and other benevolent institutions, "which, whether of a local or general kind, whether for ecclesiastical or civil purposes, have ever received the most cordial, generous, and unceasing support, from our noble hierarchy." Those who imagine the sum too small, should remember, that the plan of reform suggested by the author, relieves the prelates from attendance in Parliament, and the heavy expense of residence in the metropolis for several months, from the expenses of their visitations, which should be defrayed by the country, or the parishes in which they are held.

No functionary of Christ's Church, however exalted in degree, who calls to remembrance his avowal of its nature and tendency, "My kingdom is not of this world," should desire to be paid excessively for his labour, which, if performed from proper motives, ensures its own transcendant reward both here and hereafter. Nor should he be ambitious to adopt a princely style or establishment, more suitable to the affected splendour of the Romish Church, whose object is to dazzle the sight, and impose on the imagina-

cause "he loved this present evil world," and coveted its possessions, more than the felicity of heaven." * The young man who came apparently in deep earnestness to Christ for instruction, would not take up the cross and follow him, because he was not willing to sacrifice his earthly possessions, for "an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." † Can we wonder then, that the prophet should thus admonish, not only the stewards of God's holy mysteries, but all others who are desirous to be "rich in faith, and heirs of an eternal kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him:" ‡ "Seekest thou great things for thyself; seek them not:" § or that an inspired Apostle should exhort us to look for the gracious recompence of our ministerial fidelity, not in the accumulation of secular emoluments and honours, but in the approbation of our Divine Master: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." ‖ The destruction of Achan and his household, and the calamities which his avarice brought on the Israelites army, should not be forgotten. ¶ The fate of Gehazi, and the ruin in which it involved

* 2 Tim. iv. 10. † Matt. xix. 16—23. ‡ James ii. 5.
§ Jer. xlv. 5. ‖ 1 John ii. 15—18. ¶ Josh vii. 1—26.

thy of his hire." 'It is a constitution of the divine law,' says the illustrious Bacon, 'from which human laws cannot derogate, that those which feed the flock should live of the flock; that those that serve at the altar should live at the altar; that those who dispense spiritual things should reap temporal things; of which it is also an appendix that the proportion of the maintenance be not small or necessitous, but plentiful and liberal.'

to which they belong; and is as repugnant to the word of God, as it is to sound reason. Under the law, ample though not superfluous provision was made by the divine command for the Priests and Levites who ministered in the sanctuary. And is it less consonant with justice and reason, that a similar rule should prevail under the Gospel, which inculcates the duty of "providing for things honest in the sight of all men?" This state of things ought not to exist any longer; for it is not only offensive to God "who loveth righteousness, and will not behold the thing that is unjust," but also a gross dereliction of the duty which we owe to those generous benefactors, who endowed the Church with a patrimony not to be selfishly appropriated by a few, but to be as equitably as possible divided amongst the whole body of its ministers. The public voice, which ought to be respected, when it protests against the palpable infraction of just rights, should be listened to, as well as when it demands the correction of grievous abuses. In accordance with its reasonable claims, every lawful means should be used to improve the condition of the labouring clergy, and to give them that prominence, to which they are fairly entitled. It is to pluralities, and non-residence which flows from it, that the evils so loudly complained of are chiefly to be ascribed. Make the clergy more comfortable by something like an equitable division of the Church revenues, and the discontent and prejudices of the public against the establishment will speedily cease.

them on the most pious, efficient, and meritorious clergymen that could be selected. This would be a noble and magnanimous sacrifice, arguing their zeal for the divine glory and the value they attach to the Christian religion, as well as the lively interest they feel in the welfare and prosperity of the establishment itself.

Where however, from opposing circumstances, such a voluntary surrender could not be conveniently made by the patrons, would it not greatly redound to the honour of the nation and the parliament, to purchase the unalienable right of presentation to these impropriated benefices by a public grant for that special and important purpose?

But with regard to clerical impropriations, which have not been thus alienated, and consequently never have, and never can legally become private property, the case is widely different. No lapse of time can bar the Church (in its collective capacity) from any inherent rights, unless it has been dispossessed of them from time immemorial; or by a revolution the acts of which are sanctioned by the representatives of the people for the time now being. 'This is constitutional law, and the principle of it is both simple and just—namely, to prevent the alienation of property left for religious purposes, and to declare that such misappropriation, if proveable, should not be binding on the successors of persons who, as mere tenants for life, had no power to effect or permit it to the public detriment.' Hence it is the imperative and con-

to this moment, have always claimed a right to dispose of them, as a great constitutional trust, which could not be disputed.* And as to prescription, the argument founded upon it is equally invalid. Because the infraction of a trust has been connived at for successive ages, has it really lapsed, or has the obligation to fulfil it ceased? The abuse has been tolerated too long; and therefore that influential body, which, for all good purposes, is omnipotent, should promptly effect its removal, by restoring that species of property to the uses for which it was intended.

The admission of a learned prelate destroys both pleas at once. 'The property of the Church was originally conferred by those who had a right to confer it; but with a condition annexed to the gift—the condition of communicating religious instruction to the people. The state is the trustee charged with the office of taking care on the one hand, that the property is preserved inviolate and entire; and on the other, that the condition on which it was given is punctually fulfilled.'†

If the State then finds a mass of Church property, which has never acquired the distinct qualities of private property, such as independence, transference, and heretability, perverted from its original use, it is a duty incumbent on it, to exercise its guardianship and resume the misapplied property, that it might be again devoted to its legitimate use.

* Lord Henley on Reform. † Bishop of Lincoln's Charge.

of the Church will be fully adequate) the plea of necessity for consolidating poor livings, and attaching them to others, for the aggrandizement of a few individuals, to the real detriment of the parochial clergy, and the parishes so united, will easily be obviated and removed. And thus the 10,540 benefices in their consolidated state, will be increased to 12,600 incumbencies, each, enjoying the important benefit of clerical residence and service. Is this an advantage to be overlooked or depreciated by the conservators and guardians of the Church; when dissent assumes a form so rampant and proselyting, as to replenish its ranks with the bulk of the population of neglected parishes? Locate a true evangelist in every village throughout the land, who shall "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things,"* and the progress of sectarianism will be arrested; and the great majority of the people who still retain a veneration for the Church of England, will return to her communion, and gladly receive the bread of everlasting life at her hands. Christ has, in every age since its establishment, used the Church of England as the vehicle of salvation to multitudes: and when she is depurated from her secularity and defilement, and put upon a more primitive foundation, she will become increasingly spiritual and effective, and her ministrations be blessed to an extent beyond all conception. And should not all her friends ardently wish for such a happy consummation?

* Titus ii. 10.

and for whose benefit it was exclusively, (with the exception of the share allotted to the Bishop, archdeacons. and choral vicars, or chaplains) designed; let the remaining surplus be employed in erecting churches, where they are necessary, and in repairing them, when dilapidated; in building and endowing schools for instructing the poor; in furnishing the churches with devotional psalmody; and lastly, in allowing retiring pensions to prelates, incumbents, and curates, when incapacitated by age or indisposition, from the efficient performance of their high vocations.

Thus the pretext for uniting livings in order to enrich some to the manifest disadvantage of the great body of the sacred order, would be effectually done away; and every parish would be a distinct benefice, blessed with the constant supervision and exertions of its own spiritual guide; an advantage temporal and eternal, which can neither be adequately conceived nor described. Thus pluralism, the destroying cancer, that eats out the vitals of the Church militant, would receive a wholesome excision; and thus all benefices which were originally rectories, would be restored to their ancient state; and the profits attached to them by law or endowment, be placed in the hands of the incumbents, for their own maintenance. Thus the testament of the founders of the property would be honorably executed, and the public rights be preserved from violation.

6. The abrogation of the consolidated, or union act, would be a measure of common justice to the

all other pluralists to that object, as soon as they become vacant, by the decease of their present occupiers. From the 6000 appropriated livings under the system of consolidation, a considerable revenue would be produced, which with the additional means specified before, would furnish a sufficient sum to advance the income of every beneficed clergyman to £350 or £400; and in large cities and towns to £450 or £500 per annum. I repeat once more, that one such benefice only should be held by any clergyman, let his rank, abilities, or condition, be what they may. For the justice of this proposition, I shall advance no other arguments, than those which have been adduced, except I may be allowed to reiterate, that the property in question was never left by the donors of it, to be engrossed by those who now convert it to their own special advantage, instead of the general benefit of the Church. Such a perversion of a sacred trust, should not have been permitted at first; nor can any satisfactory reason be assigned why the legislature should suffer its continuance, beyond the existence of invested rights.

'The number of parochial appropriations held by the cathedral and collegiate clergy, is about 1290. Dr. Cove, p. 215, assures us, that they may be worth £723 per annum each; but that they do not produce more than £600. The amount which would arise from this source, for improving parochial benefices, would not be less than £774,000 yearly.'

their own selfish ends. Such persons possess minds too contracted to propose or admit of any plan for the amelioration of evils, which afflict whole communities. All they contend for is the statu quo by which their own advantage is secured, regardless of the consequences which may ensue from it to others. But is the general utility of Christ's holy Church, and the whole nation, to be sacrificed to the petty interests of a privileged class? An appeal to the nature and extent of the evils to be removed, and of the benefits to be derived from the reforms recommended in this work, will furnish such an answer to objectors, as ought to silence their groundless opposition to the proposed amendments. There are, however, two principal objections which deserve a more distinct consideration.

First. 'It is urged that it is dangerous to change the hands in which property is now vested, and that the tampering with one species of it, gives the example of interfering with other property. To this it may be answered, that there is no sort of analogy between corporate and public property, devised for the spiritual good of a nation, and private inheritances obtained by purchase or grant. And though it should be conceded that the transfer would to a certain extent be objectionable; yet as it would be impossible to effect the desired object, by leaving the property in its present state; partly from the extent and nature of the fund itself, and partly from the constitution of those corporations, in which it would be vested, it

the enormous crime, unless it provided such scanty revenues, as would almost lead to the extinction of religion. In the next place, the facilities for executing such a project would be very small. The fund being in land, the alienation of it would be widely different from the simple process of wiping away a specific portion of a national debt. The forms and delay of a public or private sale must be observed, and purchasers would not easily be found, who would be willing to become guilty accomplices in the sacrilegious robbery; because they must be conscious how readily a succeeding Parliament, would nullify what its predecessor had decreed. Nor is it extremely probable that such a dishonest administration would be so blind to its own secular interests, as to commit an act, that would alienate from it every wise and good and religious person in the country.* The classical maxim is applicable here—'Minima de malis.' The experiment of reform, then, to the extent advocated in this publication, should be instantly attempted; because it is infinitely more rational to incur a very remote possibility of temporary danger, than to forego the possession of a certain and substantial good, which involves the happiness of countless millions of our species in this life, and through endless ages, in the next. †

The office of parish clerk is of some importance to the proper celebration of divine service, seeing

* Lord Henley, pp. 37—40.

† 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE DISPOSAL OF CHURCH PATRONAGE, AND THE HIGH RESPONSIBILITY ATTENDING IT—THE FREQUENT ABUSE OF THE IMPORTANT TRUST TO SECULAR OBJECTS—THE EVILS CONSEQUENT THEREUPON—THE RECTIFICATION OF THE ABUSE—THE BENEFITS WHICH WOULD RESULT TO THE CHUCH FROM THE CORRECTION OF THE GLARING EVIL.

WHATEVER trust a man is called upon to exercise, whether it refers to temporal or eternal concerns, it should be managed with the utmost fidelity and discretion, of which he is capable. No trust can be confided to men involving such momentous interests, as those which are of a religious kind; the right execution of which, primarily relates to the glory of God, and ultimately to the common good of all mankind, millions of whom may be benefited or injured, everlastingly, by the manner in which it is discharged. The bestowment, therefore, of patronage in the appointment to Church offices, whether the highest or lowest, carries with it a degree of responsibility equal to, if not greater than that which attaches to the pastoral care itself. It is a talent put into our hands, not to be used

hitherto been exercised? Have the advisers of the Crown, in all cases, been solicitous to recommend individuals for that high office from a consideration of their character and qualifications? Have worth, virtue, learning, ability, and true piety, been duly honoured? Parliamentary influence, I fear, has always had more influence than it should have on such occasions; and, consequently, individuals have been elevated to sees, more because of their ministerial connexions, than because of that integrity and intelligence, that separation from the world, and that knowledge of men, which is so beautifully expressed by our divine Lord, as a combination of "the simplicity of the dove, and the wisdom of the serpent;" which alone can enable the overseers of God's heritage "rightly to divide the word of truth," and so to preside over its appointed ministers, as to promote their efficiency, appreciate their worth, and "give them their meat in due season." Indeed, on the ground solely of such influence some have been raised to the Episcopal office, whose orthodoxy has been seriously questioned. This representation is as true, as it is deplorable. And while the case continues to be such, nothing effectual can be done for the improvement and better government of the Church. As long as its high places are filled by those persons, whose promotion is the result of ministerial favouritism, or parliamentary intrigues, so long will its affairs be administered with a view to temporal, rather than spiritual interests. The administration of Church

is it to be wished, for the vitality and efficiency of the Church, that the same line of conduct may be uniformly followed. When once it shall be recognized as an indispensable duty, that none shall be exalted to the highest offices of the Church, but those who are duly qualified to sustain them, a true lustre will be shed unitedly on the Crown and the Church, which will make them the admiration of the whole world.

3. We might ask any candid man who has fairly revolved the subject in his mind, whether the first consideration of the generality of those who are invested with the right of patronage is not, how they may most effectually employ it in the service of their relatives and friends? If they are laymen, it is often capriciously bestowed to gratify the clamorous importunity of an acquaintance or companion, or one, whose principal recommendation is, that he has catered to their pleasure. In the case of Bishops, it is too frequently made subservient to family interests and connexions, or private attachments. 'So that the generality of patrons, both lay and clerical, would consider it most unreasonable to give the best preferments to any individuals, however qualified, before they provided for their own connexions. And indeed, the public have become so conversant with this scandalous misappropriation of ecclesiastical property, that, when a prelate does occasionally depart from the ordinary practice, and prefer some worthy man, praise and admiration is sure to attend him for it, as though he had done some extraordinary

titution of its patronage to secular purposes. 'Can the Bishops themselves be expected to be more conscientious in this matter than those by whom they have been chosen? If they or lay-patrons should make improper appointments, can we be surprised, seeing how they themselves have been appointed? Do they often neglect real merit? They never would have had an opportunity of so doing, had they not seen it neglected by others. Are they susceptible of those influences which lead them to employ their power in providing for their own families rather than to use it in furtherance of those spiritual objects, for the sake of which it was originally conferred?' This scandal, which is peculiar to the establishment, must be speedily removed; if its efficiency and spirituality are to be considered, in preference to every private object: for so long as noblemen and other lay-patrons witness this gross misappropriation of sacred things in the government, and temporal heads of the Church, will they not consider themselves more excusable in adopting the same plan?

A marked alteration, therefore, must take place in the principles which seem hitherto to have regulated the bestowment of ecclesiastical preferments. 'It is the welfare of the Church of Christ, and that alone, which should be the primary consideration in all arrangements which concern the condition of the clergy.' Whatever measure has a tendency to produce a constant succession of pious, virtuous, zealous, learned, and evangelical minis-

tency has been so notorious as "to make them a by-word and reproach among the people?"

4. The disease, though it has become inveterate by long standing, is happily not incurable. It may easily, by the application of suitable means, be very greatly mitigated, if not entirely removed. I admit that all power lodged in human hands, is more or less liable to abuse, but this admission offers no reason for the continuance of evils which may be almost, if not altogether corrected. If we cannot, through the frailty of our nature, arrive at absolute perfection, shall we be justified, as responsible beings, in not endeavouring to come as near to it as possible? If by a remedial measure acknowledged to be generally efficacious, we fail in a few solitary instances to afford the desired relief, will it be wise, therefore, to discontinue it altogether? By parity of reasoning, if it shall be found, that, upon the improved system of patronage about to be recommended, a few unworthy appointments to offices in the Church shall be discovered, will it be expedient on that account to dismiss it without further trial, and to cling pertinaciously to abuses which have already impaired its health and prosperity; and threaten, if not soon removed, to effectuate its total destruction? Our Lord himself chose the seventy disciples, as well as the twelve apostles, for the important embassy on which he sent them.* And the apostles and their converts, after the ignominious death of

* Luke x. 1—17.

consisting of the two Archbishops, and the Bishop of London, with four noblemen in Parliament, and a minister for ecclesiastical affairs, to preside over the commission, might be advantageously chosen, by whom the disposal of all preferments should be made, and the concerns of religion, as far as they come under the cognizance of the state, should be steadily and vigilantly superintended. An oath should be taken by the parties, for the conscientious performance of the awful trust reposed in them. When a bishopric or a benefice becomes vacant, the grand principle that should actuate the commissioners in appointing to it, must be that one, which alone, is just in the sight of God and man—"detur digniori." No claim of consanguinity, no regard to private attachments and partiality, and no reference to political expediency, must be allowed to exclude the most meritorious candidate to make room for one, who, instead of contributing to the support and true dignity of the Church, will only lie like a dead weight or incubus upon it. By such a measure two important objects will be gained; the secretary of the Home Department would be relieved from a very onerous responsibility, and from exposure to great temptation; and the Church itself would receive from the commissioners a more undistracted attention. It would then be considered more with reference to the improvement of its condition than to its subserviency to temporal objects; which grievously debases it. It is thus alone, that a reasonable hope can be entertained 'that the

Tillotson, are names which reflect no discredit on those by whom they were recommended for the mitre. Now if so salutary a measure were judged expedient, when the Church was fortified against both Dissenters and Papists, it cannot be supposed less necessary, at a time when the House of Commons has been thrown open to those who make no secret of their hostility to the established religion, and who may, at any moment, take their seats amongst her Majesty's constitutional advisers? At a time like the present, when the pope and his cardinals are triumphing in the expectation of seeing Roman Catholicism re-established in the nation, through the exertions, which the puseyitic faction are making to accomplish it; when political dissent is combining with infidelity to lay the Church prostrate with the ground, and thus to shake our civil and ecclesiastical institutions to their very centre; whilst it is incumbent upon us to guard against the imminent dangers which threaten us from without; surely it is imperative upon us to provide a remedy for terminating the abuses which prey upon the Church within; and from which she is in more peril of destruction, than from all the diabolical craft and policy and violence of her external foes. 'An end must be put to the abuses which have been specified, or they will infallibly put an end to the Church.' If by such a plan as that which has been suggested, good bishops, pious and efficient priests and deacons could be secured, of which there is a reasonable prospect, what incalculable benefits

goodly cedars, and make them more vigorous, beautiful, and attractive, by pruning their too luxuriant branches.

I am certain that the plan of reform suggested in this work, would, if adopted, draw down the divine blessing more abundantly upon the Church of England, and make her "an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations." *

I devoutly pray therefore, that God would dispose those exalted persons, who are clothed with proper authority in Church and State, to effect without unnecessary delay, such salutary reforms, in order to stop the mouths of her malevolent gainsayers, and force them to exclaim with respect to her, what the pious king of Israel did in reference to the Church of old, "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion. God is known in her palaces as a sure refuge." †

A PRAYER FOR THE PROSPERTY AND INCREASED USEFULNESS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

O Thou glorified Saviour, who hast graciously planted a branch of the universal Church, which thou hast purchased with thy blood, in this favoured kingdom, and caused it to take root in the land; deign to look favourably upon it, and keep it night and day lest any should hurt it. Water it continually with the dew of thy heavenly blessing, that it may increase more abundantly in vigorous

* Isai. lx. 15. † Psalm xlviii. 2, 3.

may be established amongst us, through all generations. Finally, inspire the whole Church with hallowed zeal for the extension of thy spiritual kingdom, by inducing it to make the most strenuous efforts to send out thy light and salvation to the unenlightened heathen, that thy ways may be universally known on earth, thy saving health amongst all nations. Amen.

shall Michael stand up, the great prince, which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." * The prince of darkness is evidently preparing for the conflict, by raising up a numerous band of infidels and papists to do his work, and God is mustering his mighty hosts for the battle, by diffusing the knowledge of his will, and by inspiring his honoured servants with zeal and fidelity to carry on the spiritual warfare. As truth is opposed to error, and righteousness to iniquity, we have no dread of the issue of the contest. Supported by his omnipotent arm, "the saints of the Most High God shall prevail, and prosper exceedingly, trampling upon the power of the enemy, and subjugating "every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." "Then the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." † To the rival combatants, I have a widely different message to deliver: "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with them; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked; it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him." ‡ "Who therefore is on the Lord's side? let him come unto

* Dan. xii. 1. † Isa. xxxii. 17. ‡ Isa. iii. 10, 11.

me, and show himself valiant for the truth upon the earth: "* but whosoever is dastardly, and fearful, and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Zion; lest he should paralize the energies of the faithful, and be a troubler in Israel; "for the battle is the Lord's," and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully:" † therefore put yourselves in array against mystical modern Babylon round about: "all ye that bend the bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows: for she hath sinned against the Lord. Therefore shall her young men fall in the streets, and all her men of war shall be cut off in that day, saith the Lord. Behold I am against thee, O thou most proud, saith the Lord of Hosts: for thy day is come, the time that I will visit thee. And the most proud shall stumble and fall, and none shall raise him up: and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it shall devour round about him." ‡

In anticipation of such events, let me call upon you, my Christian brethren and countrymen, as soldiers of Christ, who have sworn allegiance to your heavenly commander, "to put on your armour," not of earthly, but of spiritual temper, even the panoply of the Gospel; and go forth, in the spirit of David, to meet "the Goliah, and the uncircumcised Philistines, that defy the armies of the living God." If ye "be strong and acquit yourselves like men," victory shall assuredly terminate

* Jer. ix. 3. † Rev. xvii. 14. ‡ Jer. xlviii. 10.

in your favour: and you shall receive a recompense for your valour and fidelity, which I cannot adequately describe. To animate your souls, hear the voice of your divine Saviour; "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit down with me on my throne in heaven, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." *

But let us come down from the altitude from whence we have been merely spectators of the immense preparations which are making for this terrible day of the Lord, and descend into the field of battle. Allow one "who watches for your souls, as he that must give an account," plainly to instruct you in the nature of your duties and your high privilege. "I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation."

"God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not very far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being." † Some he hath by his wise ordination, elevated to the high places of the earth, who are more exposed to temptation than their inferior brethren; others he hath placed in the middle ranks of life, and the rest he has situated in the

* Rev. iii. 21, 22. † Acts xvii. 24, 29.

on earth. The former, agreeably to prophecy, is to be destroyed by a colossal military power from the north of Europe, (perhaps Russia,) under the emblematical language of the "drying up of the great river Euphrates, that the way of the kings of the east, (probably the Jewish nation is thus designated) might be prepared." * The encroachments made by Russia on the Ottoman empire within the last thirty years, lead us to infer that that power is destined to be used as the divine instrument for accomplishing the remarkable prophecy. The drying up, or the exhaustion of a river is, in the symbolical language of Scripture, tantamount to the subjugation and destruction of a kingdom. The latter is to be annihilated by the signal vengeance of the Almighty: of mystical modern Babylon, the Church of Rome, it is affirmed—"therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God that judgeth her."† Of the same apostacy St. Paul was inspired to declare, "then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus Christ shall consume with the breath of his mouth and destroy with the brightness of his coming." ‡ This imminent crisis calls upon you, my Protestant brethren, vigorously to oppose two classes of deadly enemies to the Church of Christ, infidelity in all its delusive phases, and Popery in all its mysterious and artful devices. First, in order to

* Rev. xvi. 12. † Ibid. xviii. 8. ‡ 2 Thess. ii. 8—11.

testimony of Scripture, for "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, or the honey-comb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward." *

Shun, then, such evil men and seducers, as well as their principles, with as much promptitude and earnestness, as you would a house infested with the plague; the latter can only affect the short-lived interests of the body; the former convey with them a pestilential virus, which, if imbibed, will effectually destroy your souls, and deprive you of a joyful immortality. Will you receive men to your bosoms, who dishonour your Saviour, rob God of his rightful authority, and pour unmitigated and supercilious contempt upon his revealed will? For "what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness; and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" † Ever remember the important declaration of the blessed apostle, St.

* Psalm xix. 7—12. † 2 Cor. vi. 14—18.

justification, by an infused inherent righteousness in baptism, by maintaining the necessity of justification by faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ for salvation. That sacred volume gives no countenance whatever to the necessary efficacy of the sacraments, an extravagant notion set up by Papists, and those divines who wander in the same inextricable labyrinth, to establish the tyranny and pride of a deluded priesthood, and satisfy its insatiable avarice. The sacred volume completely overthrows the preposterous idea of the pope's infallibility, by calling him the man of sin, the son of perdition, who blasphemously "exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped." * It exposes the dogmas of the mass and purgatory, the worship of saints and transubstantiation, as the wicked inventions of deceived men, to tyrannize over the consciences of mankind, and subject them to a most grievous bondage.

Can you then, my brethren, connive at, much less support such a system of falsehood and delusion? Know ye not that they who submit to Rome, and "receive the mark of the beast in their foreheads," dishonour Christ, and will be condignly punished for their apostacy at the last day.† "But beloved, I am persuaded better things of you, and such as accompany salvation, though I thus speak to you."

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith

* 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. † Rev. xiv. 9—13.

profound and unfathomable depths, and immeasurable breadths, and wrapt in silent amazement exclaim, "O the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" A Being thus crowned with glory and honour is the only fit object of your worship; and he imperatively commands it: "My son, give me thine heart." * And he grounds his claim upon the relationship which you bear to him. "A son honoureth his Father and a servant his master: if then I be a Father, where is mine honour? And if I be a Master, where is my fear, saith the Lord of Hosts?" † Angels which excel in wisdom, holiness and might, are obedient to the divine mandate; in manifestation of their adoration and submission, and reverence, they cast their crowns before his throne, saying, without a dissentient voice, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." ‡ Imitate the angelic host, and wonder, love, and praise. Let not infidels or sceptics, or deists, or Socialists, falsely so called, or Chartists, or Latitudinarian libertines, rob you of your dearest hopes and privileges, by the treasonable suggestion, 'that God is too much occupied about the vast concerns of the heavenly state, to notice and require the services of imperfect creatures.' Shatter their fallacious arguments to pieces by confuting them

* Prov. xxiii. 26. † Malachi i. 6. ‡ Rev. iv. 10, 11.

Public worship; by requiring you in honour of his name and perfections, and on pain of his tremendous displeasure, to hallow his sabbaths, venerate his house, and love his sacred ordinances. Like David, testify to all your grateful and obediential spirit, by saying, "I was glad when they said to me, let us go up to the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. For there the Lord hath promised his blessing, and life for evermore," to his faithful worshippers.* Join in the prayers and rituals of the Church with devout supplications. Hear the word of God, like men who are conscious that "it is the savour of life unto life, the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" and obeyeth it.† Retire from divine service with a meditative and praying heart, that the means of grace may be blessed and become productive of the hope of glory.

Erect an altar in your houses, and call upon the everlasting God.‡ Conduct the whole business of domestic worship with due solemnity and sincerity. Remember that you have to do with him "who is a God of judgment, by whom actions are weighed."§ He can detect the latent hypocrisy of the heart as easily as he can discern its integrity. Summon the attendance of every member of your establishments, that they may join with yourselves in making "a perpetual covenant with the Lord, that shall not be forgotten."‖ If you

* Psalm cxxii. 1—9. † 2 Cor. ii. 15—17.
‡ Gen. xxi. 33. § 1 Sam. ii. 3. ‖ Jer. l. 4, 5.

assaults of your spiritual foes, the world, the flesh, and the devil; you will resist the attempts of infidelity to seduce you from the way of righteousness; and shine as stars of some magnitude in your terrestrial course; and when time shall be swallowed up in eternity, "you shall shine" still more illustriously "as the sun in the kingdom of your Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear," and obey.*

2. "Honour the king." Loyalty and obedience to the sovereign is the next duty which Christianity proposes for your consideration;—an imperious duty which you must be solicitous to perform, if you are desirous to honour God and conciliate his royal favour. Hear the unalterable decree of heaven. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore (unlawfully) resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For (conscientious) rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt not thou then be afraid of the power (when you wantonly violate its rights)? Do that which is good (by acting conformably to the laws) and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid: for he beareth not the sword (of justice) in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon them that do

* Matthew xiii. 43.

or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him; for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing, ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God." * Should therefore any 'blaspheme God and the Queen,' show your disapprobation of their impious spirit, by either rebuking them in a manly, Christian way, that they may be ashamed; or by withdrawing from their presence, that you may not tacitly connive at their guilt.

Secondly; support it against all the machinations of its adversaries, whether domestic or foreign. If just occasion demand it, vigorously defend the altar and the throne; and show yourselves Britons worthy of a constitution, that is at once the envy and admiration of the whole world.

Thirdly; pray for its prosperity and permanence. Let your fervent orisons ascend up to the throne of heaven, and say with a devotional heart, 'God save the Queen,' and pour the choicest blessings on her head. Scripture commands it: "I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications and prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." †

* 1 Peter ii. 13, 17. † 1 Timothy ii. 1, 2.

descend to men of low estate;" for it is God who maketh you to differ; and what have you that you have not received? Now, if you did receive it, why should you glory as if you had not received it?* "Be not high-minded, but fear."†

5. You will not then listen to the factious cry of political demagogues, and levellers, whatever specious appellations they may assume, or however plausible may be the schemes which they recommend for adoption. "These are wells without water, clouds that are carried about with a tempest; to whom (without genuine compunction and amendment) the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage."‡ Should it happen (which God in his mercy forbid) that the just prerogatives of the crown are invaded, or the rights and liberties of the people are infringed, peaceably petition the throne and the senate; and leave the redress of contingent grievances, to their united wisdom; whose duty it is to devise such a constitutional remedy for them, as the exigency of the case may call for. Finally, brethren, do not associate with those whose object is to subvert the institutions of

* 1 Cor. iv. 7. † Romans xi. 20. ‡ 2 Pet. ii. 17—20.

AN ADDRESS

TO INFIDELS, SCEPTICS, AND DEISTS, ON THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE, AND THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

My Brethren,

Permit a minister, who feels an affectionate solicitude for your well-being, to address you on a subject of the first and last importance. I often feel mournful on your account, when I think of your abused privileges, and the consequences involved in the misapplication of your talents. "Through the tender mercy of your God," life, and health, and all its blessings, are continued to you day by day. And does not so much goodness and benignity on the part of your heavenly Father call for suitable acknowledgments from you? "It is of the Lord's mercy that you have not been long ago consumed; because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is his faithfulness."* Ingratitude for favours received from any one of your species, is a crime which you hold in detestation. How is it, then, that you can allow yourselves deliberately to commit, in an enormous degree, that very offence against the Majesty of Heaven, which you are so ready to visit on all occasions, with condign vengeance, when perpe-

* Lamentations iii. 22, 23.

go through them, and burn them up together! Yet compassionating your weakness and folly, and ignorance, and desirous of your happiness, he counsels you to take hold of his strength, that you may make peace with him, and you shall secure it. *

But perhaps you regard such denunciations of wrath as childish terrors, to affright you out of your propriety, or as so many empty fulminations of powerless anger, or as mere chimeras, that exist only in the heated imaginations of enthusiasts and melancholy bigots. To correct your levity and unbelief, go to the confines of hell, and ask its inhabitants, what are their views on the subject! Ask them if they can afford to laugh at the non-existence and agency of Satan; and they will tell you with one accord, that you now are, as they formerly were, the dupes of his crafty and ingenious influences, because you believe not the truth as it is in Christ. Ask them if the punishment of sin argues that it is a mere peccadillo, which a Popish indulgence can pardon, or a few hypocritical tears can wash away; a harmless fault, that God overlooks, and his justice does not avenge? and their answer will be, that the righteousness of the Lord has sentenced them to expiate its infinite guilt, by unavailing "weeping, and lamentation, and woe." Finally, ask them if the torments of the damned are tolerable in their nature, and momentary in their duration? And they will unitedly exclaim

* Isaiah xxvii. 4, 5.

conjure you, my brethren, by the damnation of hell, and the joys of heaven, pray fervently, seriously, and constantly, for grace from on high, that you may live the life "of the righteous; and your last end be for ever blessed, like theirs." Never say in a tone of contemptuous derision of the godly, we fools count their life without honour, and their end to be madness; but rather envy their condition, and say, behold their lot is with the saints, and they are blessed for ever! Participate their joys by flying to the arms of your Saviour, who waits to be gracious to you, and "you shall find rest unto your souls."

But methinks I hear you ask, (oh, that it may be in a docile and inquiring spirit that shall lead you to a candid examination of the evidence which they bear to the truth) 'is the Bible the word of God, and the Christian Religion a revelation of the divine will to man, to guide him in the path to heaven?' We answer, unhesitatingly, that 'without all controversy they assuredly are.' And it is impossible to rise from an honest and fair perusal of their contents without arriving at the same conclusion; for the evidence they vouchsafe of their heavenly original, is so overbearing, that we are forced to admit here is truth—here is "the finger of God"—here is the way of everlasting life—here the poor are taught how to gain "the unsearchable riches of Christ," the pearl of great price,—the wretched and miserable how to become happy, and the lost how they may be eternally saved. If we deny all this, then we must "prove infidels to

ture, and of the Divine mission of those by whom they were wrought, who were empowered by God to perform them in attestation of the truths they were commanded to teach. Now, miracles, be it remembered, which bear true marks of authenticity, such as those mentioned in the Bible, may be regarded as demonstrative proofs of the revelation which they are intended to support;* and as none but a Divine Power is capable of working real miracles, we should consider those which have been performed, in confirmation of the Christian Religion, as so many vouchers to attest the truth: unless we can imagine it to be possible that God would lend his assistance for the establishment of falsehood; which is too impious a thought to be entertained for a single moment. I shall just advert to some of the most eminent miracles recorded in the Word of God. The plagues inflicted upon the Egyptians for refusing to liberate the Israelites from a most grievous bondage;† the destruction of Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea, whilst the chosen people passed safely through, with the waters piled on each side of them;‡ the abundant supply of water from the rock,§ and of manna from heaven, every morning for forty years?‖ the pillar of a cloud to guide them by day, and of fire by night,¶ together with various interpositions in behalf of God's people, manifestly prove the writings of Moses to be genuine, and that he acted

* Dr. Douglas's Criterion of Miracles.
† Exod. vii. 8—11.
‡ Ibid. xiv 1, 22, 31.
§ Ibid. xvi. 11—16.
‖ Ibid. xvii. 6.
¶ Ibid. xiii. 21.

marks of genuineness and authenticity: for they come to us attested by the most unexceptionable witnesses; they were not done secretly and in a corner, like the lying wonders of Popish imposture, but openly, and in the presence of multitudes, whose united testimony is free from the least suspicion. They were publicly avouched at the time, with every material circumstance attending them. The names of the persons who were healed, and the places in which these miraculous cures were wrought, are mentioned with great particularity; so that if they had been false or spurious, it was in the power of the enemies of christianity to have disproved them, but what is the plain matter of fact? they never denied the miracles, though they wickedly ascribed the performance of them to the agency of Satan. What more, my brethren, can you desire? If you are not convinced by such testimony as I have advanced, "neither will you be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." * Oh, give not yourselves over irremediably to scepticism and delusion, lest you should provoke God to say, "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone." † This would be the signal for your merited destruction: for if a man will not believe a God of unimpeachable veracity, he deserves to be abandoned to the obduracy of his heart.

2. The exact accomplishment of several remarkable prophecies, many ages after they were delivered, proves almost to a demonstration, the

* Luke xvi. 31. † Hosea iv. 17.

servile condition of Africa; * and finally, the unshaken respect still paid by the Jews to the rites of the Mosaic economy, and to the several books of the Old Testament, which they venerate as the oracles of God delivered to their progenitors, decidedly vouch for the antiquity and veracity of those writings.

The prophecies of the Old Testament which refer to the life, birth, kingdom, sufferings, death, resurrection and exaltation of our blessed Saviour, when contrasted with their complete fulfilment in the New Testament, evince to a demonstration, that they were written by inspiration of God, whose exclusive prerogative it is "to declare the things that shall be hereafter."

The predictions of Christ and his apostles equally demand your serious attention. The destruction of Jerusalem, and the calamities brought upon its inhabitants by the Roman armies,† as attested by Josephus and profane writers; the rapid progress of the Gospel, in spite of all the opposition which it would have to encounter;‡ the various corruptions of Christianity by papists and heretics; the idolatry, tyranny, and sanguinary persecutions of Rome, papal and imperial; with the existence and continuance of the Christian religion to this day, after the repeated efforts of its enemies to extirpate it; these remarkable events, which have been fulfilled, afford satisfactory evidence, that the writings which contain them, are indeed the infallible word of God.

* Gen. ix. 25. † Matt. xxii. 7. ‡ Ibid. xxiv. 14.

in pieces. You charge us believers in Christ with being destitute of reason, and arrogate the possession of the invaluable faculty exclusively to yourselves. One of our number, who was competent to the task, shall decide the controversy.

> 'Wrong not the Christian, think not reason yours;
> 'Tis reason our great master holds so dear;
> 'Tis reason's injured rights his wrath resents;
> 'Tis reason's voice obeyed, his glories crown;
> To give lost reason life, he poured his own.
> Believe, and show the reason of a man;
> Believe, and taste the pleasures of a God;
> Believe, and look with triumph on the tomb:
> Through reason's wounds alone thy faith can die;
> Which, dying, tenfold terrors gives to death,
> And dips in venom his twice mortal sting.' *

3. If you are not yet satisfied of the truth of Christianity, other arguments of a conclusive nature shall be advanced, to prove its divine original. The complete harmony which subsists among the sacred writers is no inconsiderable argument of their own inspiration, and of the truth of the divine records themselves. They nowhere advance contradictory accounts of the creation of the world, the perfections of God, and the obligations of men. They agree in their representations of the malignity and demerit of sin; and point us to Christ only for deliverance from its condemning power and polluting effects. They inculcate the same heavenly truths, and apply them to the same practical uses; in a word, they speak of every religious subject relating to our duty and happi-

* Young's Night Thoughts, Book IV.

to the judgment which the Divine Word passes upon our state and conduct. It does not coincide with the false estimate which men generally form of themselves; nor does it condescend to flatter the pride, or to accommodate its requisitions to the wicked propensities of our fallen nature: on the contrary, it lays open our sins and faults; and whilst it freely censures, it tells us how to escape the punishment due to our offences. The condition of man as a depraved creature is described with so much accuracy in the Bible, that whoever impartially examines his own experience by this unerring standard, will be convinced that the book which thus discloses the hidden springs of human action must have been written by inspiration of God.

4. Objections have been urged against the Scriptures, because they contain some things which are highly mysterious. It was natural to expect that this would be the case; for a revelation of the Divine will, without anything in it, above our limited comprehension, would carry its own refutation with it. God is incomprehensible in all his works, even in the greatest as well as most inconsiderable; as the growth of a blade of grass, the formation of the massive bulk of an elephant, or the most diminutive insect in creation. And can we expect to discover no traces of mystery in the amazing scheme of our redemption by Christ, into which angels, who possess an intellect only inferior to the all-wise God, look with astonishment?

divine oracles sheds light upon another, so as to produce a glorious harmony in its representation of celestial things.

6. Others of you have objected to the Scripture on account of the supposed poverty of its style, as if it were not written eloquently enough for the wiser part of mankind. Not to insist that several of the most learned men have declared that some portions of the book of Job, and the writings of the prophets, are expressed in the loftiest strains of true sublimity, we conceive that pride lies at the bottom of the objection; for the Scriptures were not written to instruct men in the principles of natural wisdom, but "to make them wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." It plainly argues, then, the goodness of God, in granting a revelation, which is at once adapted to the understanding of all descriptions of men.

7. Furthermore, the powerful tendency of the Bible to promote the cause of righteousness and morality and virtue in the world, is evident, not only from its own intrinsic excellence and the exalted purity of its precepts, but from the marked piety of those holy men who have conformed to its directions. Living in the fear of God, and conscientiously discharging every duty, the primitive saints and christians waited for the heavenly inheritance promised to them that obey the Lord.*

8. The striking effects which are still produced by the Word of God on the hearts of those who

* Heb. ii. 7—17.

9. Several collateral proofs might be brought to confirm the authority of the Bible, such as the integrity and righteousness of the inspired writers, which made it impossible for them to deceive others: and the miraculous powers displayed in behalf of their mission, evince that they could not be deceived themselves. The resolution with which many of them persisted in their testimony, though it exposed them to the greatest losses, and the most shocking deaths, demonstrates that they could have had no other object to answer by it, than the promotion of the Divine glory, and the common benefit of mankind. Moreover, the frequent appeals made to the Scriptures soon after they were written, the wide circulation of the sacred books, which were translated into the various languages of different countries; and the veneration in which they have been constantly held by good men, are presumptive arguments in favour of the inspiration of the sacred writings.*

10. To add one more suggestion: let the wavering consider that "the consequences of their present conduct are, according to the Bible, so momentous, that if there were only a bare possibility of the truth of the Scriptures, it would be madness to run the risk of rejecting them, for "the sake of gaining the whole world." What folly is it, then, when we have such unanswerable demonstrations that they are the Word of God,

* See Grotius on the Christian Religion. Paley's Theology. Watson's Apology for the Bible. Author's Lectures. Jenkins on the Reasonableness of Christianity. Butler's Analogy.

divine origin, and the benefits which it is capable of conveying. And if God, in compassion to our ignorance, has given us a book that is able to make us wise and happy, we cannot be guilty of offering a greater affront to him, than to reject or neglect it. Such conduct is not only an impeachment of his infinite wisdom, which deemed the unspeakable gift necessary to our salvation; but argues a reckless inattention to our own well-being. We can never be happy, but as we live in obedience to God, to whom we are responsible for our actions: and how can we properly obey his commands, if we do not take suitable pains to know what they are from his own word?*

Receive then, I entreat you, his Revelation, as the only safe guide to Heaven. It is, indeed, a pole-star, to direct your course, under whose salutary directions you may "pass securely through all the waves of this troublesome world," till you arrive "at the haven" of eternal rest.

11. To answer all your flippant objections is needless, as it has been already ably done by those learned writers, to whom I have referred you. It only remains for me to show the fallacy and unreasonableness of your system—its immoral tendency, and the imminent danger to which it exposes you. And shall I not speak "the words of soberness and truth," if I assert, without fear of confutation, that Infidelity and Scepticism have no origin but in folly and ignorance, no aliment but in depravity, no reason but in madness?

* See Author's Lectures on the Inspiration of the Bible. Vol. I.

Saviour, who thoroughly understands the constitution of his spiritual kingdom, and the qualification necessary for admission into it, spoken in a similar strain. "Blessed are ye that mourn (for sin) for ye shall be comforted. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see (and enjoy) God. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." *

But you are philosophers, my brethren, "and no doubt wisdom shall die," as well as live, "with you."† "Produce, then, as it behoveth you, your cause saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob."‡ Hath God distinguished you above the rest of his works by the endowments of speech and reason? And why did he confer these inestimable benefits upon you? —Certainly, that you might not pervert them to pride, and vanity, and contempt of your benevolent Maker; but conscientiously employ them in his service? And what is the loftiest exercise of philosophy and sound wisdom, but the knowledge of things natural and spiritual, grounded upon reason and experience? Is it not its proper province, after all that can be said, to choose suitable means adapted to the attainment of a beneficial end? Is it not then the prostitution of sound reason, rather than its right application, to employ it in detracting from the glory of God, and to use it solely for rebellion against him?

The evil tendency of your system in a moral point of view cannot be too faithfully exhibited.

* Matt. v. 1—13. † Job xii. 2. ‡ Isai. xli. 21, 22.

very foundations on which its security is built? Can Deism, and Rationalism, and infidelity, and scepticism promote loyalty and obedience to "the powers that are ordained of God?" that order, subordination, and integrity, upon which the welfare and prosperity of a community, so materially depend? Or do they not powerfully tend to produce discontent, insubordination, and that recklessness of spirit, which "fit men as vessels of wrath for destruction?"

I know full well the answer you will return to my interrogations, is, that many who profess the Christian religion are not over scrupulous "to maintain good works which are profitable to men." This is, and shall be for a lamentation." But this concession by no means justifies your proud contempt of the gospel, nor is it any detraction from its superlative value and efficacy. To all who receive it aright, and live in subjection to its righteous dictates, it is affirmed to be "the power of God unto their present and future salvation." And if any abuse it to licentiousness, and hold it in hypocrisy, and deceit, it is not more reasonable to object to it on that account, than it would be in you, to reject the current coin of the realm, because it is sometimes artfully imitated by that which is spurious and deceptive. It is not wise to argue sophistically against the proper use of a thing from the grievous perversions which are made of it; for upon this principle you must abstain from the use of common food and all the necessaries of life. But after every deduction

eous, are alike descriptive of the different systems which they have embraced. The Christian approaches the king of terrors in its most hideous and appalling forms, with calmness and composure. At " peace with God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ," he can triumphantly challenge the grim monster to do its worst, saying, " O death, where is thy sting; O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." * The poet therefore is justified in saying,

> 'The chamber where the good man meets his fate
> Is privileged beyond the common walks of life.'†

" Mark then the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." ‡

But the infidel, although he may affect to despise death at a distance, does not like to grapple with his victorious enemy. He startles back with horror at his dread appearance, because, conscious of unpardoned guilt, he fears to meet his foe, lest he should introduce him to an angry God, who " is a consuming fire to the impenitent." The miserable exit of Paine and Voltaire, and hosts of impious men, reads a profitable admonition to you, which should produce the just conviction that

> 'Men may live fools,
> But fools they cannot die.'

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* 1 Cor. xv. 55—58. † Young's Night Thoughts.
‡ Psalm xxxvii. 37.

Hence Christianity is a truth attested by the living and dying experience of good men in all ages, and therefore is worthy of all acceptation on account of the immense benefits which it confers. But scepticism and irreligion are unfriendly to the best interests of man, causing their votaries to cast off the fear of God, and render themselves unprofitable to men; and therefore is utterly indefensible, and impious, and execrable.

The dangers to which it exposes you, my brethren, are fearfully overwhelming. "The Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."* You cannot bear to contemplate this tremendous day. You are alarmed (and well you may be) when you think of "the worm that dieth not, and the fire which is not quenched."† And will you dare to incur even the possibility, much less the certainty, of all these perils, and risk the forfeiture of eternal bliss, for the momentary enjoyment of "the pleasures of sin," and to gratify the malignant hostility of your hearts against your Saviour and your judge? Is this rationality and true wisdom? No; 'of all man's miraculous mistakes, this bears the palm.'

* 2 Thess. i. 7—11. † Mark ix. 44—48.

You are about to launch forth on the boundless abyss of eternity, in a shattered bark, without a compass and a pilot to direct your course, to brave all the fury of the relentless storm. The first wave you encounter may dash your fragile boat in pieces against the rocks, and engulph you in the ocean of "shame and everlasting contempt." Eternity is at hand; for the apocalyptic "angel, with his hand lifted up to heaven, will soon be commissioned to swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, that time shall be no longer." * Then the day of grace will pass away, and the judgment will commence. Then the gospel of Christ proclaiming a general jubilee, will salute your ears no more. The Saviour will not then intercede for, nor be entreated by you; † but if you die hardened, you will be consigned to remediless perdition, reserved for ungodly men. I intreat you affectionately once more, to survey the perilous ground on which you stand; it sinks beneath your feet, and yet you cleave to it with a pertinacity worthy of a better cause. Beware of the fate of Koran, Dathan, and Abiram, and depart, I pray you, from the tents of wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins." ‡

God has distinguished some of you with talents of no common sort; you are, some of you, men of research and erudition. But what avails all this, so long as you prostitute them to the service of

* Rev. x. 1—8. † Luke xiii. 6—10. ‡ Numb. xvi. 1—36.

the world, the flesh, and the devil? May not the same thing be affirmed of you, which was truly spoken of the Earl of Rochester in his unregenerate state? 'God hath bestowed the talents upon you which you possess, but Satan has hitherto directed the application of them to subserve his own designs.' Like that, now happy nobleman, repent, and feel remorse for the injury you have done, and make the only atonement in your power to the world, by a formal recantation of your errors.* But if you refuse to grant me this reasonable request; then consider how many fine and splendid geniuses shall awake up in eternity, from their dreams of vain glory, each one of them wishing that he had been an irrational brute, or an insect, that they might never have been responsible for talents and privileges, neglected or abused! How natural was the dying exclamation of one of them, when he observed at the termination of his earthly career, 'I have fought a great battle, but the victory is lost for ever and ever.' Add not, I beseech you, in your own person, to their unhappy number: for if you take your lot with them, "it had been good for you, if you had never been born; it had been better for you that a millstone were hanged about your necks, and that ye had been cast into the depths of the sea." †

Further, some of you perhaps have had the incalculable advantage of pious parents, who offered up many a prayer in your behalf, and

* Bp. Burnet's Life of the Earl of Rochester.

† Matt. xviii. 6.

watered them with their tears. But it may be that you feel an unwarrantable disgust against vital religion, because of the foibles which you saw in them—infirmities which are inseparable from humanity, in this imperfect state. Is not this as irrational and absurd, as if you were to reject the light and comfort, and the benefits of the meridian sun, because of the spots which cover his surface? Know ye for once, that their peccadilloes, however emblazoned by you, were real excellencies, when contrasted with your most brilliant deeds. Their departed spirits still hover around you, crying, with a loud voice; 'follow us: come up hither;' for we earnestly "desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end; that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience are inheriting the promises."* As ye are men who cannot cut asunder the ties of parental regard, listen to their cry; emulate their example and holiness, and be happy, for why will ye be for ever severed from their tender caresses, instead of seeking a blessed re-union with them, durable as eternity itself?

But, brethren, a few words more, and I must shortly bid you an eternal adieu. You tell us with an ignorant and presumptuous confidence which has been inspired by "the father of lies," that you have no doubt that your final destiny will be as happy as ours. Where did you learn, but in

* Heb. vi. 11, 12.

the school of infidelity, that the grave is the total oblivion of the past, present, and future? Know ye not that annihilation is the dream of fools? I will correct your egregious mistake in the elegant words of one who is gone to heaven to confute your wicked assertion, and to prove the reality of his own:

'If our hopes of immortality are visionary, where is the evil? If it be a dream, is it not a pleasant one? to say the least of it, it beguiles away many a melancholy hour, and can do no harm; but (oh, dread alternative) if it be a reality, what will then become of you?'

Begin immediately to invoke repentance from God, whom you have insulted and dishonoured, and it shall be given you. Hear the gracious proclamation which he utters to encourage your return to his offended majesty. "Let the wicked man forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon;" * yea, "he will not retain his anger against you for ever; because he delighteth in mercy." †

But you have contracted such a load of guilt, say some of you, that you fear the case is an irretrievably lost one. Not so: for God invites you to confer with him about the matter in dispute betwixt you; and his infinite wisdom has prescribed a remedy for your spiritual malady, however des-

* Isai. lv. 6—10. † Micah vii. 18—20.

perate it may be. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; (when washed in the Saviour's blood) though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." *

May I not ask you in the words of the Prophet, "is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered." † Oh, try its efficacy in your own case. Let your motto henceforth be, 'reform or ruin,' 'awake, arise, or be for ever lost.'

Be wise to-day, 'tis madness to defer,
Next day the fatal precedent will plead;
Thus on, till wisdom is push'd out of life.
Procrastination is the thief of time;
Year after year it steals, till all are fled,
And to the mercies of a moment leaves
The vast concerns of an eternal state. ‡

You have need of this friendly advice; for you are not happy;—indeed it is impossible; for you often suspect the truth of your principles, and have fearful forebodings of the wrath to come. Like the impious monarch, you are terrified at the "hand-writing upon the wall," ‖ and sigh for dissolution.

* Isai. i. 16—21.
† Jer. viii. 22.
‡ Young's Night Thoughts.
‖ Dan. v. 5.

But why will you cast away all hope? I cannot abandon you to your fate, without another effort to calm your perturbations and give you peace. I will lingeringly pursue you with the invitation of my Lord and Master, and with the salutation of his servant. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, Come. And whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely."* "God is now in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing to men their trespasses, (when they unfeignedly repent) and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."†

Finally, brethren, farewell! Seek pardon for your manifold transgressions. Abjure the service of Satan. Live in the fear of God; and when time is swallowed up of eternity, you shall "enter into the joy of your Lord." That you may obtain such a blessed consummation is the fervent prayer of your faithful servant, the author.

* Rev. xxii. 17. † 2 Cor. iv. 18.

NOTE TO CHAPTER XV.

MANY infants die by the visitation of God, almost as soon as they are ushered into the world, and others perish before they can obtain the Holy Sacrament of Baptism from the hands of the parish minister, and thus, according to the direction of the rubric, are prohibited the rite of Christian sepulture. As in most, if not all, of such unfortunate cases, it may he presumed that it would have been the sincere desire of their parents, to avail themselves of the benefit of the ordinance of Baptism, if their children had lived, of which God saw fit to deprive them, by an untimely death, and not by their own or their parent's neglect, can there be any sufficiently valid reason assigned why these hapless babes should be denied the privilege of Christian burial, which would afford consolation to the sorrowing parents, whose grief for their departure must be rendered still more poignant by the want of a rite that is esteemed decent and necessary in the eyes of all professing Christians?

If baptism is not essential to salvation and admission into heaven, (and who but Papists and those who accord with them in sentiment, will have the temerity to say it is,) will any sound theologian be so presumptuous, as to exclude such unbaptized infants from the possession of Christ's kingdom, who easily can, and we charitably hope does, qualify them for the reception of the bliss thereof, by the regenerating influence of his Holy Spirit, and the efficacy of his atonement, without the aid of Baptism? As Jesus, whilst on earth showed compassion to infants and

little children, by taking them up in his arms and blessing them, and by affirming that "of such is the kingdom of heaven:" * would it not be more congenial with the benevolent aspect of his religion, which is a dispensation of mercy and love, to accord this Christian benefit to them, rather than commit them unceremoniously and privately to the ground in the obscurity of the night? Christianity should be divested, even in its rites, of the repulsiveness and uncharitableness of the Romish Church, and assume all the benignancy that characterised the disposition of its divine founder, who "requires mercy and not sacrifice." On these grounds I humbly conceive, that it would be highly expedient to abolish the rubric which disqualifies infants for Christian burial, and admit them to the participation of a decent rite, by adapting a service to their case as well as those, who have been brought by baptism within the pale of Christ's visible Church.

* Matt. xix. 13—16.

THE END.

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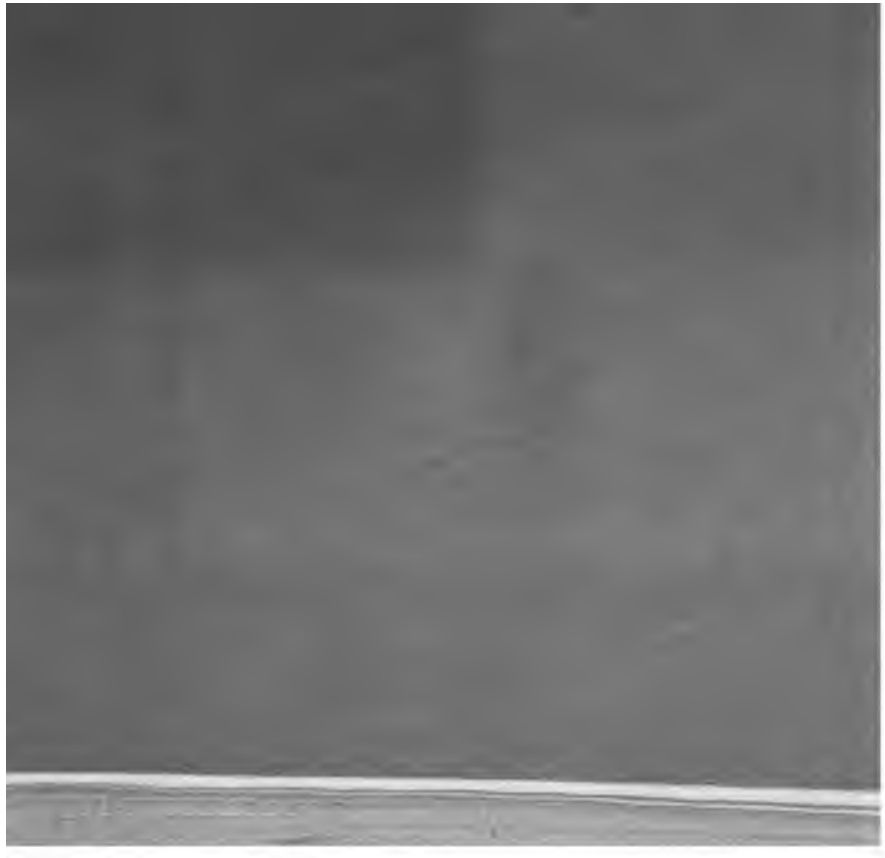
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